

LETTERS
FROM A
PERSIAN
IN
ENGLAND

To his FRIEND at
ISPAHAN.

The SIXTH EDITION.
Corrected and altered by the AUTHOR.



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M DCC LXI.





TO THE
BOOKSELLER.

S I R,



Need not acquaint you by what accident these Letters were put into my hands, and what pains I have taken in translating them; I will only say, that having been long a Scholar to the late most learned Mr. Dadichy, interpreter of the Oriental languages, I have acquired skill enough in the Persian tongue, to be able to give the sense of them pretty justly; though I must acknowledge my translation far inferior to the Eastern sublimity of the original, which no English expression can come up to, and which no English reader would admire.

I am aware that some people may suspect that the character of a Persian is fictitious, as many such counterfeits have appear'd both in France and England. But whoever reads them with at-

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tention, will be convinc'd, that they are certainly the work of a perfect stranger. The observations are so foreign and out of the way, such remote hints and imperfect Notions are taken up, our present happy condition is in all respects so ill understood, that it is hardly possible any Englishman should be the Author.

Yet as there is a pleasure in knowing how things here affect a foreigner, though his conceptions of them be ever so extravagant, I think you may venture to expose them to the Eyes of the World, the rather because it is plain the man who wrote them is a lover of liberty ; and must be supposed more impartial than our countrymen when they speak of their own admir'd Customs, and favourite opinions.

I have nothing further to add, but that it is a great pity they are not recommended to the publick by a dedication to some great man about the Court, who would have patroniz'd them for the freedom of their stile ; but the publisher not having the honour to be acquainted with any body there, they must want that inestimable advantage, and trust entirely to the candour of the reader. I am,

S I R,

Your most humble Servant.





LETTERS

FROM A
PERSIAN in ENGLAND.

LETTER I.

SELIM to MIRZA at Ispahan.

From London.



THOU knowest, my dearest Mirza, the reasons that moved me to leave my country, and visit England; thou wast thyself, in a great measure, the cause of it. The relations we received from our friend Usbec of those parts of Europe which he had seen, rais'd in us an ardent desire to know the rest, and particularly this famous island, of which, not having been there himself, he cou'd give us but imperfect accounts.

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By his persuasion we determin'd to travel thither, but when we were just ready to set out, the sublime orders of the Sophi our master detain'd thee at the feet of his sacred throne.

Unwilling as I was to go alone, I yielded to thy importunities, and was content to live single among strangers and enemies to the Faith, that I might be able to gratify thy thirst of knowledge.

My voyage was prosperous, and I find this country well worthy our curiosity. The recommendations given me by Usbec to some English he knew at Paris, are a great advantage to me; and I have taken such pains to learn the language, that I am already more capable of conversation than a great many foreigners I meet with here, who have resided much longer in this country.

I shall apply myself principally to study the English Government, so different from that of Persia, and of which Usbec has conceiv'd at a distance so great an idea.

Whatever in the manners of this people appears to me to be singular and fantastical, I will also give thee some account of; and if I may judge by what I have seen already, this is a subject which will not easily be exhausted.

Communicate my letters to Usbec, and he will explain such difficulties to thee as may happen to occur; but if any thing shou'd seem to you both to be unaccountable, do not therefore immediately conclude it false; for the habits and reason-



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reasonings of men are so very different, that what appears the excess of Folly in one country, may in another be esteemed the highest wisdom.

L E T T E R II.

SELIM to MIRZA at Ispahan.

From London.

THE first objects of a stranger's curiosity are the publick spectacles. I was carried last night to one they call an Opera, which is a concert of musick brought from Italy, and in every respect foreign to this country. It was perform'd in a chamber as magnificent as the resplendent palace of our emperor, and as full of handsome women as his seraglio: they had no eunuchs among them, but there was one who sung upon the stage, and, by the luxurious tenderness of his airs, seemed fitter to make them wanton than keep them chaste.

Instead of the habit proper to such creatures he wore a suit of armour, and call'd himself Julius Cæsar.

I ask'd who Julius Cæsar was, and whether he had been famous for singing?

They told me, he was a warrior that had conquer'd all the world, and debauch'd half the women in Rome.

I was going to express my admiration at seeing him so properly represented, when I heard two

ladies who sat nigh me, cry out, as it were in an ecstasy, O that dear creature! Madam, an't you quite in love with him?

Bless me, said I, why should the women in this country be so fond of eunuchs? Methinks they have men enough about them.

At the same time I heard a gentleman say aloud, that both the musick and singers were detestable.

You must not mind him, said my friend, he is of the other party, and comes here only as a spy.

How, said I, have you parties in musick? Yes, reply'd he, it is a rule with us to judge of nothing by our senses and understanding, but to hear, and see, and think, only as we chance to be differently engaged.

I hope, said I, that a stranger may be neutral in these divisions; and to say the truth, your musick is very far from inflaming me to a spirit of faction; it is much more likely to lay me asleep. Ours in Persia sets us all a-dancing, but I am quite unmoved with this.

Do but fancy it moving, return'd my friend, and you will soon be moved as much as others: it is a trick you may learn when you will with a little pains; we have most of us learnt it in our turns.

L E T T E R III.

SELIM to MIRZA at Ispahan.

From London.

BEING desirous to see the form of an English wedding, I was obliged to go into one of their mosques, for marriage here is esteemed a religious ceremony, and that I believe is one reason among others why so little regard is paid to it. There were two couple to be married that day; the first was an old man and a young girl, the next, an old woman and a young man.

I was surprized at the extravagance of their choice; but was told that the two old people were very rich, and that the young ones married them for their money—Out of the four, said I to my companion, I could make one happy match: I would give the two women to that youth who wants the fortune of one to maintain the other; and I would make the old man guard them by way of eunuch.

When the ceremony was performing I observed the poor young maid, and saw, that tho' her hand was in the gripe of decrepit threescore, her eyes and heart were fix'd on five and twenty: the young fellow too bent his glances all that way, and seem'd to tell her that he was entirely at her service, notwithstanding any obligation to the contrary: nay, the priest himself look'd as if he

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had much rather have performed the conclusion of the ceremony than the beginning; and, on my conscience, the holy man was as well qualified for that office as for this.

I was ready to laugh to hear them vow that they would love one another all their lives, as if it was possible to answer for inclination so long before-hand; though indeed they might safely promise to love to eternity as well as they did then.

But I could not help rejoicing that I was born in a reasonable country, where marriages are made for pleasure, not for profit, and where they last no longer than the liking which form'd them first.

LETTER IV.

SELIM to MIRZA at Ispahan.

From London.

I WAS this morning present at a diversion extremely different from the opera, of which I have given thee a description, and they tell me it is peculiar to this country. The spectators were placed in galleries of an open circus; below them was an area filled, not with eunuchs and musicians, but with bulls and bears, and dogs and fighting-men. The pleasure was to see the animals worry and gore one another, and the men give and receive many wounds for so much money.

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money. I had great compassion for the poor beasts which were forcibly incens'd against each other; but the human brutes, who, unexcited by any rage or sense of injury, could spill the blood of others, and expose their own, seem'd to me to deserve no pity. However, I look'd upon it as a proof of the martial genius of this people, and imagined I could discover in that ferocity a spirit of freedom. A Frenchman that sat near me was much offended at the barbarity of the sight, and reproach'd my friend who brought me thither, with the sanguinary disposition of the English, in delighting in such spectacles. My friend agreed with him in general, and allow'd that it ought not to be encouraged in a civiliz'd state: but a gentleman who was placed just above them cast a very sour look at both, and did not seem at all of their opinion. He was dress'd in a short black wig, had his boots on, and held in his hand a long whip, which, when the fellow fought stoutly, he would crack very loud by way of approbation. One would have thought by his aspect that he had fought some prizes himself, or at least that he had received a good part of his education in this place. His discourse was as rough as his figure, but did not appear to me to want sense. I suppose, Sir, said he to my friend, that you have been bred at court, and therefore I am not surpriz'd that you do not relish the Bear-Garden: but let me tell you, that if more people came hither, and fewer loiter'd
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in the drawing-room, it would not be the worse for Old England: we are indeed a civiliz'd state, as you are pleas'd to call it, but I could wish, upon certain occasions, we were not quite so civil. This gentleness and effeminacy in our manners will soften us by degrees into slaves, and we shall grow to hate fighting in earnest when we don't love to see it in jest. You fine gentlemen are for the taste of modern Rome, squeaking eunuchs and corruption, but I am for that of ancient Rome, gladiators and liberty. And as for the barbarity which the foreigner there upbraids us with, I can tell him of a French King whom their nation is very proud of, that acted much more barbarously; for he shed the blood of millions of his subjects out of downright wantonness, and butcher'd his innocent neighbours without any cause of quarrel, only to have the glory of being esteem'd the greatest Prize Fighter in Europe.

LETTER V.

To KOULI MOLLACK, one of the Ministers
of the Tomb at Medina.

ALAS! most venerable Mollack, I fear I am too bold in writing to thee: thou wilt shudder at receiving a letter infected with the air of an impure and unhallowed climate. Thy sanctity is equal to the angels who are joined with thee in guarding the holy tomb. Thy soul

is continually with the Prophet, far removed from the dust and corruption of this earthly spot : thou art asham'd of the glories of the world : thou seekest no precedency but in goodness : thou art humbler than the worm which thou well knowest must one day feed upon thee. If any man should offer thee his gold, thou wouldst trample it under thy feet : if the Sultan thy master should consult thee on his temporal affairs, thou wouldst tell him thy knowledge is confin'd to the Book of God, and all thy thoughts taken up with that alone.— What then shall I say to thee, O holy Mollack, that is worthy a moment of thy attention ? Shall I tell thee of the laws and customs of the people with whom I dwell ? No, those subjects are too profane, and would disturb thee from higher meditations. I will therefore tell thee what I know will please thee better ; that the true religion is by degrees introducing itself among these Infidels. A beam of light from the temple of Chaaba has pierced the darkness that enclos'd them, and gives a comfortable promise of a brighter day. The most difficult precept of our law is already received in England, there are numbers who abstain from the use of wine.

That prohibition so often broke by Mussulmen, is here religiously observed, and I am assured that the sect of these water-drinkers encreases daily. The priests indeed are alarmed at this new practice, which they look upon as dangerous to them, and therefore do not encourage it by their example ;

ple; but, notwithstanding their obstinacy, the truth prevails, and thou may'st soon expect a general reformation.

LETTER VI.

SELIM to MIRZA at Ispahan.

From London.

IT is the Law of England, that when a debtor is insolvent, his creditors may shut him up in prison, and keep him there, if they please, all his life, unless he pays the whole of what he owes. My curiosity led me the other day to one of those prisons: my heart is still heavy with the remembrance of the objects I saw there. Among the various causes of their undoing, some are of so extraordinary a kind, that I can't help relating them to thee. One of the prisoners, who carried in his looks the most settled melancholy, told me he had been master of an easy fortune, and lived very happily a good while, till he became acquainted with a lawyer, who, in looking over some old writings of his family, unluckily discover'd certain parchments that gave him a right to an estate in the possession of one of his neighbours; upon which he was persuaded to go to law; and after prosecuting his suit for twenty years, with a vexation that had almost turn'd his brain, he made the lawyer's fortune, reduc'd his neighbour to beggary, and had no sooner gain'd

gain'd his cause, but his creditors seiz'd on both estates, and sent him to enjoy his victory in a jail.

Next to him was a young fellow of great vivacity, and who seem'd nothing dejected with his misfortune. He had run out a good estate in a little time, by putting his affairs into an attorney's hands, who involved him in such a labyrinth of mortgages, annuities, and bonds, that he was not able to extricate himself out of it. I found him very busy among a heap of law books, which he told me was his study, and that by the help of them he did not doubt but he should raise a better fortune than he had lost; for, added he, I know by my own experience, whosoever is skill'd in their mysteries can never be poor. Lands and tenements are transitory things; but this is an inexhaustible fund, which, the more you draw from it, will yield the more. At these words he fell a reading again, and seem'd not to care to be longer interrupted.

A third inform'd me that he was a citizen, and born to a considerable estate, but being covetous to improve it, had married a very rich heiress, who was so vastly genteel in her expences, and found so many ways of doing credit to herself and her husband, that she quickly sent him from his new house near the court, to the lodgings in which I found him. Why did not you divorce her, said I to him, when you found that her extravagance would be your ruin? Ah, Sir, replied he, I should have been a happy man, if I could
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but have caught her with a gallant, I might then have got rid of her by law; but, to my sorrow, she was virtuous as well as ugly; her only passions were equipage and gaming.——I was infinitely surpriz'd, that a man should wish to find his wife an adulteress, or that he should be obliged to keep her to his undoing, only because she was not one.

Another said he was a gentleman of a good family, and having a mind to rise in the state, spent so much money to purchase a seat in Parliamēt, that, though he succeeded pretty well in his views at court, the salary did not pay the debt; and being unable to get himself chose again at the next election, he lost his place and his liberty both together.

The next that I spoke to was reputed the best scholar in Europe; he understood the oriental languages, and talked to me in very good Arabick.

I ask'd how it was possible that so learned a man should be in want, and whether all the books he had read could not keep him out of jail? Sir, said he, those books are the very things that brought me hither. Would to God I had been bred a cobbler: I should then have possess'd some useful knowledge, and might have kept my family from starving: but the world which I read of, and that I liv'd in, were so very different, that I was undone by the force of speculation.

There was another who had been bred to merchandize, but being of too lively an imagination
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for the dulness of trade, he applied himself to poetry, and, neglecting his other business, was soon reduced to the state I saw him in: but he assured me he should not be long there; for his lucky confinement having given him more leisure for study, he had quitted poetry, and taken to the mathematicks, by the means of which he had found out the longitude, and expected to obtain a great reward which the government promised to the discoverer. I perceived he was not in his perfect senses, and pitied such an odd sort of frenzy: but my compassion was infinitely greater for some unhappy people who were shut up in that miserable place, by having lost their fortunes in the publick funds, or in private projects, which the wickedness of these times has been very fertile of, that under the fallacious notion of great advantage, draw in the unwary to their destruction. Good Heaven, said I, can it be possible that, in a country govern'd by laws, the innocent who are cheated out of all should be put in prison, and the villains who cheat them left at liberty! With this reflexion I ended my enquiries, and wish'd myself safe out of a land where such a mockery of justice is carried on.

LETTER VII.

SELIM to MIRZA at Ispahan.

From London.

I WAS the other day in a house where I saw a sight very strange to a Persian; there was a number of tables in the room, round which were placed several sets of men and women: they seemed wonderfully intent upon some bits of painted paper which they held in their hands: I imagin'd at first that they were performing some magical ceremony, and that the figures I saw traced on the bits of paper, were a mystical talisman or charm: what more confirmed me in this belief was the grimaces and distortions of their countenances, much like those of our magicians in the act of conjuring: but enquiring of the gentleman that introduced me, I was told they were at play, and that this was the favourite diversion of both sexes.

We have quite another way of diverting ourselves with the women in Persia, answer'd I. But I see no signs of mirth among them: if they are merry, why don't they laugh, or sing, or jump about? If I may judge of their hearts by their looks, half of these revellers are ready to hang themselves! that may be, said my friend, for very likely they are losing more than they are worth.—How! said I, do you call that play?—Yes, replied he, they never are well pleased unless

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unless their whole fortunes are at stake: those cards you see them hold are to decide whether he who is now a man of quality shall be a beggar, or another who is now a beggar, and has but just enough to furnish out one night's play, shall be a man of quality.

The last, said I, is in the right; for he ventures nothing: but what excuse can be thought on for the former? Are the Nobility in England so indifferent to wealth and honour to expose them without the least necessity? I must believe that they are generally sure of winning, and that those they play with have the odds against 'em.

If the chance was only equal, answered he, it would be tolerable; but their adversaries engage them at great advantage, and are too wise to leave any thing to fortune.

This comes, said I, of your being allow'd the use of wine. If these gentlemen and ladies were not quite intoxicated with that cursed liquor, they could not possibly act so absurdly.——But why does not the government take care of them when they are in that condition? Methinks the fellows that rob them in this manner should be brought to justice.

Alas! answered he, these cheats are an innocent sort of people: they only prey upon the vices and luxury of a few particulars; but there are others who raise estates by the miseries and ruin of their country; who game not with their own money, but with the publick, and securely play

play away the substance of the orphan and the widow, of the husbandman and the trader. Till justice is done upon these, the others have a right to impunity; and it is no scandal to see gamesters live like gentlemen, where stock-jobbers live like princes.

LETTER VIII.

SELIM to MIRZA at Ispahan.

From London.

THOU would'st be astonish'd to hear some women in this country talk of love: their discourses about it are as refin'd as their notions of Paradise, and they exclude the pleasure of the senses out of both. But however satisfied they may be in the world to come with such visionary joys, it is my opinion, that the nicest of them all, if she were to enjoy her paradise here would make it a Mahometan one. I had lately a conversation on this subject with one of these Platonicks (for that is the title they affect) in answer to all her pretty reasonings, I told her the following tale of a fair lady, who was a Platonick like herself.

The Loves of Ludovico and Honoria.

THE City of Genoa has been always famed above any town in Europe for the refinement of its gallantry. It is common there for a gentleman to profess himself the humble servant
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of a handsome woman, and wait upon her to every publick place for twenty years together, without ever seeing her in private, or being entitled to any greater favours than a kind look, or a touch of her fair hand. Of all this sighing tribe the most enamour'd, the most constant, and the most respectful was Signor Ludovico.

His mistress Honoria Grimaldi, only daughter to a Senator of that name, was the greatest beauty of the age in which she lived, and at the same time the coyest and most reserv'd. So great was her nicety in the point of love, that although she could not be insensible to the addresses of Signor Ludovico, yet she could not bring herself to think of marrying her lover, which, she said, was admitting him to freedoms entirely inconsistent with the respect that character requires. In vain did he tell her of the violence of his passion for her; she answered, that her's for him was no less violent; but it was his mind she lov'd, and could enjoy that without going to bed to him. Ludovico was ready to despair at these Discourses of his mistress: he could not but admire such fine sentiments, yet he wish'd she had not been quite so perfect. He writ her a very melancholy letter, and she return'd him one in verse full of sublime expressions about love, but not a word that tended to satisfy the poor man's impatience. At last he applied himself to her father, and, to engage him to make use of his authority, offer'd to take Honoria without a portion.

tion. The father, who was a plain man, was mightily pleased with this proposal, and made no difficulty to promise him success. Accordingly he very roundly told his daughter, that she must be married the next day, or go to a nunnery. This dilemma startled her very much. In spite of all her repugnance to the marriage bed, she found something about her still more averse to the idea of a cloister: an absolute separation from Ludovico was what she could not bear; it was even worse than an absolute conjunction. In this distress she did not know what to do; she turn'd over above a hundred romances to search for precedents; and, after many struggles with herself, resolved to surrender upon terms. She therefore told her lover that she consented to be his wife, provided she might be so by degrees, and that after the ceremony was over, he would not pretend at once to all the rights and privileges of a husband, but allow her modesty leisure to make a gradual and decent retreat. Ludovico did not like such a capitulation, but rather than not have her, he was content to pay this last compliment to her caprice. They were married, and at the end of the first month, he was very happy to find himself arriv'd at the full enjoyment of her lips.

While he was thus gaining ground, inch by inch, his father died, and left him a great estate in the island of Corsica: his presence was necessary there, but he could not think of parting from Honoria. They embark'd together, and Ludovico

vico had good hopes, that he should not only take possession of his estate, but of his wife too, at his arrival. Whether it was, that Venus, who is said to be born out of the sea, was more powerful there than at land, or from the freedom which is usual aboard a ship, it is sure, that during the voyage, he was indulged in greater liberties than ever he had presumed to take before; nay, it is confidently asserted, that they were such liberties as have a natural and irresistible tendency to overcome all scruples whatsoever. But while he was sailing on with a fair wind, and almost in the Port, Fortune, who took a pleasure to persecute him, brought an African corsair in their way, that quickly put an end to their dalliance by making them slaves.

Who can express the affliction and despair of this loving couple, at so sudden and ill-timed a captivity! Ludovico saw himself deprived of his virgin bride on the very point of obtaining all his wishes; and Honoria had reason to apprehend that she was fallen into rougher hands than his, and such as no considerations could restrain. But the martyrdom she looked for in that instant was unexpectedly deferr'd till they came to Tunis. The Corsair seeing her so beautiful, thought her a mistress worthy of his Prince, and to him he presented her at their landing, in spite of her own and her husband's tears.—O unfortunate end of all her pure and heroical sentiments! Was it for this that her favours were so long and so obstinately

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stinately denied to the tender Ludovico, to have them ravish'd in a moment by a rude Barbarian, who did not so much as thank her for them? But let us leave her in the seraglio of the Dey, and see what became of Ludovico after this cruel separation. The Corsair, finding him unfit for any labour, made use of him to teach his children musick, in which he was perfectly well skill'd. This service would not have been very painful, if it had not been for the remembrance of Honoria, and the thought of the brutalities she was expos'd to: these were always in his head, night and day, and he imagin'd that she had, by this time, kill'd herself rather than submit to so gross a violation. But while he was thus tormenting himself for one woman, he gave equal uneasiness to another. His master's wife saw him often from her window, and fell violently in love with him.—The African ladies are utter strangers to delicacy and refinement. She made no scruple to acquaint him with her desires, and sent her favourite slave to introduce him by night into her chamber. Ludovico would fain have been excused, being ashamed to commit such an infidelity to his dear Honoria, but the slave informed him, that if he hoped to live an hour, he must comply with her lady's inclinations; for that, in Africk, refusals of that kind were always revenged with sword or poison. No constancy could be strong enough to resist so terrible a menace: he therefore went to the rendez-

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vous at the time appointed, where he found a mistress infinitely more complying than his fantastical Italian. But in the midst of their endearments they heard the Corfair at the door of his wife's apartment : upon the alarm of his coming, the frightened lover made the best of his way out of the window, which not being very high, he had the good fortune to get off unhurt. The Corfair did not see him, but by the confusion his wife was in, he suspected that some body had been with her. His jealousy directed him to Ludovico, and though he had no other proof than bare suspicion, he was determin'd to punish him severely, and at the same time secure himself for the future. He therefore gave orders to his eunuchs to put him in the same condition with themselves, which inhuman command was perform'd with a Turkish rigour, far more desperate and compleat than any such thing had been ever practis'd in Italy. But the change this operation wrought upon him, so improv'd his voice, that he became the finest singer in all Africk. His reputation was so great that the Dey of Tunis sent to beg him of his master, and preferr'd him to a place in his own seraglio. He had now a free access to his Honoria, and an opportunity of contriving her escape : to that end he secretly hired a ship to be ready to carry them off, and did not doubt but he should find her very willing to accompany his flight. It was not long before he saw her, and

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you may imagine the excess of her joy, at so strange and agreeable a surprize.

Can it be possible, cried she; can it be possible that I see you in this place! O my dear Ludovico; I shall expire in the pleasure of your embraces. But by what magick could you get in, and deceive the vigilance of my tyrant and his guards?

My habit will inform you, answered he, in a softer tone of voice than she had been us'd to, I am now happy in the loss which I have sustain'd, since it furnishes me with the means of your delivery. Trust yourself to me, my dear Honoria, and I will take you out of the power of this Barbarian, who has so little regard to your delicacy. You may now be happier with me than you was before, as I shall not trouble you with those coarse solicitations which gave you so much uneasiness. We will love with the purity of angels, and leave sensual enjoyments to the vulgar, who have not a relish for higher pleasure.

How, said Honoria, are you really no man? No, replied he, but I have often heard you say, that your love was only to my mind, and that, I do assure you, is still the same. Alas! said she, I am sorry mine is alter'd: but since my being here, I am turn'd Mahometan, and my religion will not suffer me to run away with an unbeliever. My new husband has taught me certain doctrines unknown to me before, in the practice of which I am resolv'd to live and die. Return to your
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own country, good Signor Eunuch; but don't think of carrying me with you, for you have no need of a wife in your present circumstances. Adieu, I tell thee; my conscience won't permit me to have a longer conversation with such an Infidel.

Thus ended the loves of Ludovico and Honoria.

LETTER IX.

SELIM to MIRZA at Ispahan.

From London.

I HAVE receiv'd thy answers to my letters with a pleasure, which the distance I am at from my friends and country, render'd greater than thou would'st believe, I find thee very impatient to be inform'd of the government and policy of this country, which I promis'd to send thee some account of; but though I have been diligent in my enquiries, and lost no time since my arrival here, I am unable to answer the questions thou demandest of me, otherwise than by acknowledging my ignorance.

Thou askest if the English are as free as heretofore: the courtiers assure me confidently that they are; but the men who have least relation to the Court, are daily alarming themselves and others, with the apprehension of danger to their liberty.—I have been told that the Parliament is the curb to the King's authority; and yet I

am well inform'd that the only way to advancement in the Court is to gain a seat in Parliament.

The House of Commons is the representative of the nation, nevertheless there are many great towns which send no deputies thither, and many hamlets, almost uninhabited, that have a right of sending two. Several members have never seen their electors, and several are elected by the Parliament, who were rejected by the people. All the electors swear not to sell their voices, yet many of the candidates are undone by the expence of buying them. This whole affair is involved in deep mystery, and inexplicable difficulties.

Thou askest if commerce be as flourishing as formerly : some whom I have consulted on that head say, it is now in its meridian ; and there is really an appearance of its being so ; for luxury is prodigiously encreased, and it is hard to imagine how it can be supported without an inexhaustible trade : but others pretend, that this very luxury is a proof of its decline ; and they add, that the frauds and villanies in all the trading companies are so many inward poisons, which, if not speedily expell'd, will destroy it entirely in a little time.

Thou would'st know if property be so safely guarded as is generally believ'd : it is certain that the whole power of a king of England cannot force an acre of land from the weakest of his subjects ; but a knavish attorney will take away his whole estate by those very laws which were
design'd

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design'd for its security: the judges are uncorrupt, appeals are free, and notwithstanding all these advantages it is usually better for a man to lose his right than to sue for it.

These, Mirza, are the contradictions that perplex me. My judgment is bewilder'd in uncertainty; I doubt my own observations, and distrust the relations of others: more time, and better information, may, perhaps, clear them up to me; till then, modesty forbids me to impose my conjectures upon thee, after the manner of Christian travellers, whose prompt decisions are the effect rather of folly than penetration.

L E T T E R X.

SELIM to MIRZA at Ispahan.

AS I now understand English pretty well, I went last night with some friends to see a play: the principal character was a young fellow, who, in the space of three or four hours that the action lasted, cuckolds two or three husbands, and debauches as many virgins. I had heard that the English theatre was famous for killing people upon the stage, but this author was more for propagating than destroying.

There were a great many ladies at the representation of this modest performance, and, tho' they sometimes hid their faces with their fans (I suppose for fear of shewing that they did not blush) yet, in general, they seem'd to be much delighted

with the fine gentleman's heroical exploits. I must confess, said I, this entertainment is far more natural than the opera, and I don't wonder that the ladies are pleased at it: but if in Persia we allow'd our women to be present at such spectacles as these, what would signify our bolts, our bars, our eunuchs? Though we should double our jealousy and care, they would soon get the better of all restraint, and put in practice those lessons of the stage which it is so much pleasanter to act than to behold.

LETTER XI.

SELIM to MIRZA at Ispahan.

From London.

A Friend carried me lately to an assembly of the Beau Monde, which is a meeting of men and women of the first fashion: the croud was so very great, that the two sexes promiscuously pressed one another in a manner that seem'd very extraordinary to oriental eyes. I observ'd a young man and a beautiful young woman sitting in a window together, and whispering one another with so much earnestness, that neither the great noise in the room, nor number of passengers, who rubb'd by them continually, gave them the least disturbance: they look'd at one another with the most animated tenderness; the lady especially, had in her eyes such a mixture of softness and desire, that I expected every moment to see them withdraw,

draw, in order to satisfy their mutual impatience, in a manner, that even the European liberty would not admit of in so publick a place. I made my friend take notice of them, and ask'd him how long they had been married. He smil'd at my mistake, and told me, they were not married; that the lady indeed had been married about a year and half, to a man that stood at a little distance; but that the gentleman was an unmarried man of quality, who made it his business to corrupt other men's wives. That he had begun the winter with this lady, and that this was her first affair of that sort; her husband and she having married for love.

I ask'd my friend, if there was any seminary, any publick foundation for educating young men of quality to this profession; and whether they could carry on the business without frequent interruptions from the respective husbands. I'll explain the whole matter to you, says he. There is indeed no publick foundation or academy for this purpose; but it depends upon the private care of their several parents, who, if I may use the expression, negatively breed them up to this business, by making them entirely unfit for any other: for, lest their sons should be diverted from the profession of gallantry by a dull application to graver studies, they give them a very superficial tincture of learning, but take care to instruct them thoroughly in the more showish parts of education, such as musick, dressing,

dancing, &c. by which means, when they come to be men, they naturally prefer the gay and easy conversation of the fair sex, and are well received by them. As for the husbands, they are the people in the world who give them the least disturbance, but, on the contrary, generally live in the strictest intimacy with those who intend them the favour of Cuckoldom. The marriage contract being here perpetual, though the causes of it are of short duration, the most sensible men are desirous of having some assistance to support the burthensome perpetuity. For instance, every man marries either for money, or for love—— In the first case, the money becomes his own as soon as the wife does; so that having had what he wanted from her, he is very willing she should have what she wanted from any body rather than from him. He is quiet at home, and fears no reproaches.

In the latter case, the beauty he married soon grows familiar by uninterrupted possession: his own greediness surfeited him; he is ashamed of his disgust, or at least of his indifference, after all the transports of his first desire; and gladly accepts terms of domestick peace through the mediation of a lover.

There are indeed some exceptions: some husbands, who, preferring an old mistaken point of honour to real peace and quiet at home, disturb their wives pleasures: but they are very few, and are very ill look'd upon.

I thank'd

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I thank'd my friend for explaining to me so extraordinary a piece of domestick œconomy; but could not help telling him, that, in my mind, our Persian method was more reasonable, of having several Wives under the care of one eunuch, rather than one wife under the care of several lovers.

L E T T E R XII.

SFLIM to MIRZA at Isfahan.

From London.

WE have often read together and admired the little history of the Troglodites, related by our countryman Usbeck *, with a spirit peculiar to his writings. Unequal as I am to the imitation of so excellent an author, I have a mind, in a continuation of that story, to shew thee by what steps, and through what changes, the original good of society is overturn'd, and mankind become more wicked and more miserable in a state of government, than they were when left in a state of nature.

Continuation of the History of the Troglodites.

The Troglodites were so affected with the virtue of the good old man, who refused the crown which they had offer'd, that they determined to remain without a King. The love of the publick

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was

* Vide Persian Letters from Paris, Vol. I. Let. XI. to XIV.

was so strong in every particular, that there was no need of authority to enforce obedience. The law of Nature and uncorrupted Reason was engraven on their hearts; by that alone they govern'd all their Actions, and on that alone they establish'd all their happiness. But the most perfect felicity of mortal men is subject to continual Disturbance. Those Barbarians, whom they had defeated some time before, stirr'd up by a desire of revenge, invaded them again with greater Forces. They fell upon them unawares, carried off their flocks and herds, burnt their houses, and led their women captive: every thing was in confusion, and the want of order made them incapable of defence. They soon found the necessity of uniting under a single chief. As the danger required vigour and alacrity, they pitch'd upon a young man of distinguish'd courage, and placed him at their head. He led them on with so much spirit and good conduct, that he soon forced the enemy to retire, and recovered all the spoil.

The Troglodites strewed flowers in his way, and, to reward the service he had done them, presented him with the most beautiful of the virgins he had delivered from captivity. But, animated by his fortune, and unwilling to part with his command, he advised them to make themselves amends for the losses they had sustained, by carrying the war into the enemy's country, which, he said, would not be able to resist their victorious arms. Desirous to punish those wicked men, they
very

very gladly came into his proposal. But an old Troglodite standing up in the assembly, endeavoured to persuade them to gentler councils.

‘ The Gods, said he, O my countrymen, have
 ‘ given us strength to repulse our enemies, and
 ‘ they have paid very dearly for molesting us.
 ‘ What more do you desire from your victory,
 ‘ than peace and security to yourselves, repentance and shame to your invaders? It is proposed to invade them in your turn, and you are told it will be easy to subdue them. But to what end would you subdue them, when they are no longer in a condition to hurt you? Do you desire to tyrannize over them? Have a care that in learning to be tyrants, you do not also learn to be slaves. If you know how to value liberty as you ought, you will not deprive others of it, who, tho’ unjust, are men like yourselves, and should not be oppressed.

This wise remonstrance was not heeded in the temper the people was then in. The sight of the desolations, that had been caused by the late irruption, made them resolve on a violent revenge. Besides they were now grown fond of war, and the young men especially, were eager of a new occasion to signalize their valour. Greater powers were therefore given to the general; and the event was answerable to his promises, for in a short time, he subdued all the nations that had join’d in the league against the Troglodites. The merit of this success, so endeared him to that grateful people, that, in the heat and riot of
 their

their joy, they unanimously chose him for their King, without prescribing any bounds to his authority. They were too innocent to suspect any abuse of so generous a trust, and thought that when virtue was on the throne, the most absolute government was the best.

LETTER XIII.

SELIM to MIRZA.

THE first act of the new King was to dispose of the conquered lands. One share of them, by general consent, he allotted to himself, and the rest he divided among those who were companions of his victory. Distinction of rank and inequality of condition, were then first introduced among the Troglodites: some grew rich, and immediately comparison made others poor. From this single root sprung up a thousand mischiefs; pride, envy, avarice, discontent, and universal depravation, unheard-of violences were committed; every Troglodite encroached on his neighbour's property, and refused to submit to the decisions of ancient custom, or the dictates of natural justice. Particulars could no longer be allow'd to judge of right; it became necessary to determine it by stated laws. The whole nation applied to the prince to make those laws, and take care of their execution. But the prince, too young and unexperienced for so difficult a task, was obliged to have recourse to the oldest and wisest

wisest of his subjects for assistance. He had not yet so forgot himself, by being seated on a new-erected throne, as to imagine that he was become all-sufficient, or that he was seated there to govern by caprice. It was therefore his greatest care, how to supply his own defects by the counsels of those who were most famed for their knowledge and abilities.

Thus a senate was formed, which, with the King, compos'd the legislature; and thus the people freely bound themselves, by consenting to such regulations, as the King and Senate should decree.

L E T T E R XIV.

S E L I M to M I R Z A.

THE institution of laws among the Troglodites, was attended with this inevitable ill effect, that they begun to think every thing was right, which was not legally declared to be a crime. It seem'd as if the natural obligations to virtue were destroy'd, by the foreign influence of human authority, and vice was not shunn'd as a real evil, but grew to be thought a forbidden good.

One Troglodite said to himself, ' I have made
' advantage of the simplicity of my neighbour,
' to over-reach him in a bargain: he may re-
' proach me, perhaps, but he cannot punish me;
' for the law allows me to rob him with his own
' consent.'

Another

Another was ask'd by his friend for a sum of money; which he had lent him some years before.

Have you any thing to shew for it, answer'd he.

A third was implored to remit part of his tenant's Rent, because the man, by unavoidable misfortunes, was become very poor. Don't you see, replied he, that he has still enough to maintain his family? by starving them he may find money to pay me, and the law requires him so to do.

Thus the hearts of the Troglodites were harden'd, but a greater mischief still ensued. The laws in their first framing were few and plain, so that any man could easily understand them, and plead his own cause without an advocate.

Some inconveniencies were found to flow from this: the rules were too general and loose; too much was left to the equity of the judge, and many particular cases seem'd to remain undetermined and unprovided for. It was therefore proposed in the great council of the nation, to specify all those several exceptions; to tie the judges down to certain forms; to explain, correct, add to, and reserve whatsoever might seem capable of any doubtful or different interpretations. While the matter was yet in deliberation, a wise old senator spoke thus:

' You are endeavouring, O Troglodites, to
' amend what is defective in your laws, but know
' that by multiplying Laws, you will certainly
' multiply defects. Every new explanation will
' produce a new objection, and at last the very
' prin-

‘ principles will be lost, on which they were
 ‘ originally form’d. Mankind may be govern’d,
 ‘ and well govern’d, under any laws that are fix’d
 ‘ by ancient use: besides that, they are known
 ‘ and understood, they have a sanctity attending
 ‘ them, which commands obedience; but every
 ‘ variation, as it discovers a weakness in them,
 ‘ so it lessens the respect; by which alone, they
 ‘ can be effectually maintained. If subtleties
 ‘ and distinctions are admitted to constitute right,
 ‘ they will equally be made use of to evade it;
 ‘ and if justice is turn’d into a science, injustice
 ‘ will soon be made a trade.’

L E T T E R XV.

SELIM to MIRZA.

AS the old man foretold, it came to pass.
 The laws were explained into contradic-
 tions, and digested into confusion. Men could no
 longer tell what was their right, and what was
 not: a set of Troglodites, undertook to find it
 out for all the rest; but they were far from doing
 it out of pure benevolence; their opinions were
 rated at so much money, and how false soever
 they might prove, the payment was never to be
 return’d. This point being once well establish’d,
 causes, that before were dispatched in half an
 hour, now lasted half a century. There were
 three courts placed one above another: on the
 door of the lowest was writ, Justice; on that of
 the

the second, Equity; and, on the highest, Common Sense. These courts had no connection with one another, and a quite different method of proceeding: if a man had occasion for the last, it was necessary to pass through the two first, and the journey was so tedious, that very few could support the fatigue or the expence. But there was one particular more strange than all the rest. It was very seldom that a man could read a word of the parchment, by which he held his estate; and they made their wills in a language, which neither they, nor their heirs could understand.

Such were the refinements of the Troglodites, when they had quitted the simplicity of nature, and so bewildered were they in the labyrinth of their own laying out.

L E T T E R XVI.

S E L I M to M I R Z A.

THE religion of the Troglodites had been hitherto as simple as their manners. They loved the Gods as the authors of their happiness; they feared them as the Avengers of injustice; and they sought to please them by doing good. But their morals being corrupted, their religion could not long continue pure: superstition found means to introduce itself, and compleated their depravation. Their first King, who had been a
con-

conqueror, and a law-giver, died rever'd and regretted by his subjects. His son succeeded, not by any claim of hereditary right, but the free election of the people, who loved a family that had done them so many services. As he was sensible that he owed his crown to their veneration for the memory of his father, he endeavoured to carry that veneration as high as possible. He built a tomb for him, which he planted round with laurels, and caused verses to be solemnly recited in praise of his achievements. When he perceived that these honours were well received in the opinion of the publick, he thought he might venture to go farther. He got it to be proposed in the senate, that the dead monarch should be deified, after the example of many nations round about them, who had paid the same compliment to their Kings. The senators were become too good courtiers, not to give into so agreeable a piece of flattery, especially as their own honour was concerned in raising the character of their founder, and the people, in the simplicity of their hearts, thought those virtues, which had render'd him the protector and father of his country, very justly entitled him to divinity.

But that their devotion might not abate by length of time, the prudent King thought it necessary to institute an order of men, to be perpetually maintain'd at the publick cost, whose only business should be to serve the idol, and keep the zeal of the worshippers always warm.

It

It is not to be conceived what an alteration this establishment produced.

Then first the Troglodites were made believe that the gods were to be gained by rich donations, or that their glory was concerned in the worldly pomp and power of their priests. A temple, said those priests, is like a court; you must present your petitions by the ministers, or they will not be received. As the people remember'd that their deity had once been a king, this doctrine seem'd plausible enough, and the priests grew absolute on the strength of it. That the comparison between the temple and the court might hold the better, a great number of ceremonies were invented, and a Magnificence of dress was added to them as essential to holiness. The women came warmly into this, and were far more zealous than the men in their attachment to the exterior part of piety. Thus the devotion of the Troglodites was turn'd aside from reality to form, and it was no longer a consequence, that a very religious was a very honest man.

LETTER XVII.

SELIM to MIRZA.

BY the artifice of the priesthood their superstition encreased every day, and nothing was thought so indifferent to religion as the practice of Virtue. It was common for a Troglodite to say,

say, ' I will plunder my neighbour or the publick ; for the anger of our God may be appeas'd by an Offering made out of the spoil.'

Another quieted his conscience in this manner ;
 ' I am indeed a very great villain, and have injured my Benefactor ; but I am a constant attendant on all processions, and have crawl'd thrice round the temple upon my knees.'

A third confess'd to a priest, that he had defrauded his pupil of an estate ; give half of it to our order, said the confessor, and we freely endow you with the rest.

But the mischief did not stop even here ; from sanctifying trifles they proceeded to quarrel about them ; and the peace of the society was disturb'd to know which impertinence should be preferr'd. This was the work of the priests, who took upon them to declare what was most agreeable to their God, and declared it differently, as it happen'd that their passions or interests required. But how slight soever the foundation was, a dispute of this nature could not fail to be warmly carried on. No-body concern'd himself about the morals of another, but every man's opinions were enquired into with the utmost rigour ; and woe to those who held any that were dislik'd by the ruling party ; for though neither side could tell the reason why they differ'd, the difference was never to be forgiven. An aged Troglodite endeavour'd to put a stop to this pious fury, by representing to them, that their ancestors, who were better
 men,

men, had no disputes about religion; but served the Gods in the only unity requir'd by them, a unity of Affection. All that the poor man got by this admonition was to be called an atheist by all the contending sects, and after suffering a thousand persecutions compell'd to take refuge in another land.

LETTER XVIII.

SELIM to MIRZA.

THE court had a deeper interest in the establishment of this priesthood among the Troglodites, than was at first attended to or foreseen. The very nature of their office particularly attach'd them to the crown: they were servants of a deified King, and it was no very great stretch of their function to deify the living monarch also. Accordingly they preach'd to all the people with an extraordinary warmth of zeal, that the family then reigning was divine; that they held the crown not by the will of the society, but by a pre-eminence of nature; that to resist their pleasure was resisting God; and that every man enjoy'd his life and his estate by their grace, and at their disposal. In consequence of these doctrines his sacred Majesty did just what he thought fit. He was of a martial genius, and had a strong ambition to enlarge his territories. To this end he rais'd a mighty army, and fell upon his neighbours without a quarrel.

The

PERSIAN in ENGLAND. 45

The Troglodites lost their blood and spent their substance, to make their prince triumphant in a war which could not possibly turn to their advantage; for the pride and power of their tyrant increased with his success. His temper too became fiercer and more severe by being accustomed to slaughter and devastation; so that his government grew odious to his subjects. Yet the dazzling glory of his victories, and the divinity they were taught to find about him, kept them in awe, and supported his authority. But the Gods would not suffer him any longer to vex mankind. He perish'd, with a great part of his army, by the united valour of many nations who had allied themselves against his encroachments. Content with having punish'd the aggressor and author of the war, they immediately offer'd peace to the Troglodites, upon condition that all should be restored which had been taken from them in the former wars. That nation, humbled by their defeat, very willingly parted with their conquests to purchase their repose.

L E T T E R X I X .

SELIM to MIRZA at Ispahan.

UNDER their third King, who succeeded his father, upon a new notion of hereditary right, the spirit of the government was wholly changed. He was young, and of a temper much
addicted

addicted to ease and pleasure; yet bred up with high conceits of kingly power, and a royal disregard to his people's good. There was a mixture of bigotry in his disposition, which gave the priests a great advantage over him; and as his predecessor had govern'd by them, they govern'd now by him.——The people too, in imitation of their Prince, soon contracted another character, they begun to polish and soften all their manners. The young Troglodites were sent to travel into Persia: they came back with new dresses, new refinements, new follies, and new vices. Like a plague imported from a foreign country, luxury spread itself from these travellers over all the nation. A thousand wants were created every day, which nature neither suggested nor could supply. A thousand uneasinesses were felt which were as unnatural as the pleasures that occasion'd them. When the minds of the Troglodites were thus relaxed their bodies became weak. They now complain'd that the summer was too hot, and the winter too cold. They lost the use of their limbs, and were carried about on the shoulders of their slaves. The women brought their children with more pain, and even thought themselves too delicate to nurse them: they lost their beauty much sooner than before, and vainly strove to repair it by the help of art. Then first physicians were call'd in from foreign lands to contend with a variety of new distempers which intemperance produced: they came; and the only
advan-

advantage was, that those who had learned to live at a great expence, now found the secret of dying at a greater.

Such was the condition of the Troglodites, when by the benefit of a lasting peace, they tasted the sweets of plenty and grew polite.

LETTER XX.

SELIM to MIRZA at Ispahan.

THE ancient Troglodites were too busy in the duties and cares of society, to employ much of their thoughts in speculation. They were skilful in mechanicks and agriculture, the only sciences for which they had any use. At their leisure they amus'd themselves with poetry, and sung the praises of the Gods, the virtues of their countrymen, and their own loves. They shew'd a wonderful force of imagination in a great number of Fables which they invented, undermost of which was concealed some moral sentiments; but for history, they contented themselves with consulting the oldest men among them, thinking it impossible to know the truth of any fact beyond the memory of the age in which they lived.——The alteration of their government and manners produced a change also in this respect. A great many people withdrew themselves entirely from the offices of life, and became a burthen to their family and country, under

under a notion of study and meditation. One set of them very modestly undertook to explain all the secrets of nature, and account for her operations. Another left nature quite behind and fell to reason about immaterial substances, and the properties of spirits. A third profess'd to teach Reason by a rule; and invented arguments to confute common sense. These philosophers (for so they stil'd themselves) were to be known from all mankind by a certain air between bashfulness and presumption. To distinguish themselves from the vulgar, they forgot how to say or do one common thing like other men. They were perfectly well acquainted with the annual and diurnal motion of the sun; but never in their lives could tell you what o'clock it was.

This render'd their behaviour very aukward, and they were conscious of it; for which reason they came little into company: yet in private their pride swell'd to such a pitch, that they imagin'd they were arriv'd at the very top of human merit, and look'd down with contempt on the greatest generals and best servants of the state. By setting such a value upon themselves they imposed upon others to that degree, that all their fellow citizens sent their sons to be educated under their instructions. It was even propos'd in the council of the King to establish an academy of philosophers, and endow it with great revenues, for the support and encouragement of learning. One of the counsellors, who was a
man

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man of a very plain, but strong understanding, singly expressed his dislike of this design. ‘ If, ‘ said he, it had been proposed to us to build an ‘ hospital for decrepit husbandmen, or decay’d ‘ manufacturers, I would willingly have come into ‘ it, for the support and encouragement of industry. But it seems to me that what you are ‘ now about will ruin industry; and that you ‘ will take the bread from the most useful of ‘ your subjects to pamper the most useless.

‘ I desire to be informed what service these ‘ men have done to recommend them to the publick? Has this learning, of which we are grown ‘ so fond, made us wiser or better than we were? ‘ Shew me the effects of it in our councils, or ‘ in our morals.—If it be nothing but an idle ‘ curiosity to pry into things that don’t concern ‘ us, it is my opinion that we buy it much too ‘ dear. I have been told, indeed, that they have ‘ discover’d an art of reasoning without which no ‘ proposition can be maintain’d, and by which ‘ any may. Our ancestors, O Troglodites, were ‘ wise, and reason’d well: yet they never heard ‘ of syllogisms, modes, or forms, or any part of ‘ this science, by which their sons can so nicely ‘ distinguish and define so justly.

‘ Our children are bred up to all this learning, ‘ and what are the fruits of it? They come into ‘ the world extremely knowing in the course of ‘ the planets, and the nature of the soul; but

‘ the manners of the world, and the heart of
 ‘ man they know nothing of. If we offer to
 ‘ instruct them, they receive our admonitions
 ‘ with contempt, and confound us by some sub-
 ‘ tilty of the schools. Instead of a quiet temper,
 ‘ and a love of truth, they have acquir’d a fond-
 ‘ ness for dispute, and a habit of evasion. I sus-
 ‘ pect too that there is something slavish in the
 ‘ obedience which these dogmatical preceptors
 ‘ require of them, and that a narrowness of
 ‘ mind must be the consequence of so implicit a
 ‘ brief.

‘ Trust me, countrymen, you would better
 ‘ serve the state, by setting all these idle fellows
 ‘ to the plough, than by publickly authorizing
 ‘ their follies, and pensioning their laziness.’

LETTER XXI.

SELIM to MIRZA at Ispahan.

AMONG the various speculations that this
 modern fashion of philosophizing produced,
 there were two more pernicious than the rest,
 and which greatly contributed to the corruption
 and ruin of the people. One was, that vice and
 virtue were in themselves indifferent things, and
 depended only on the laws of every country;
 the other, that there was neither reward nor
 punishment after this life.——It has already
 been

been observ'd how many defects the Troglodites found in their laws, and how many quibbles were invented to elude them. But still there was some restraint upon their actions, while a sense of guilt was attended with remorse, and the apprehension of suffering in another state. But by these two doctrines men were left at perfect liberty to sin out of the reach of the law; and virtue was deprived of glory here, or the hopes of recompence hereafter. There was a third notion, less impious indeed, but of very ill consequences to society, which placed all goodness and religion in a recluse and contemplative way of life.

The effect of this was, to draw off many of the best and worthiest men from the service of the publick, and administration of the common wealth, at a time when their labours were most wanted to put a stop to the general corruption.—It is hard to say which was most destructive, an opinion that, like the former, embolden'd vice, or such a one as render'd virtue impotent and useless to mankind.—

L E T T E R XXII.

SELIM to MIRZA at Ispahan.

WHILE the principles of the people were thus depraved, and their understandings taken off from their proper objects, the court became the center of immorality and every kind

of folly. Though flattery had been always busy there, yet the former Kings, who were frequently at war, had been us'd to a certain military freedom, and there were not wanting men about them who had courage to tell them truth? but the effeminacy of the present set of courtiers took from them all spirit as well as virtue, and they were as ready to suffer the basest things, as to act the most unjust. The King, wholly devoted to his pleasures, and seldom seen out of the walls of his seraglio, thought it sufficient for him to wear the crown, without troubling himself with any of the cares and duties belonging to it: the whole exercise and power of the government was lodged in the hands of a Grand Vizir, the first of that title which the Troglodites had ever known. It seem'd very strange to them at the beginning, to see the royalty transfer'd to their fellow-subject, and many thought it was debasing it too much. The priests themselves were at a loss how to make out that this sort of monarchy was divine; however, they found at last, that the Grand Vizir was a God by office, though not by birth. If this distinction did not satisfy the people, the court, nor the priests were not much concern'd about it.— But a prime minister was not the only novelty these times produced.

The Troglodites had always been remarkable for the manner in which they used their women: they had a greater esteem for them than any other of the eastern nations. They admitted them
to

to a constant share in their conversation, and even trusted them with their private affairs: but they never suspected that they had a genius for publick business, and that not only their own families, but the state itself, might be govern'd by their direction. They are now convinc'd of their mistake. Several ladies appear'd together at the helm: the King's mistress, the mistress of the Vizir, two or three mistresses of the Vizir's favourite officers, join'd in a political confederacy, and manag'd all matters as they pleased. Their lovers gave nothing, and acted nothing but by their recommendation and advice. Sometimes indeed they differ'd among themselves, which occasion'd great confusions in the state; but by the pacifick labours of good subjects such unhappy divisions were compos'd, and every thing went quietly on again. If there was any defect in the politicks of these female rulers, it was, that they could never comprehend any other point or purpose in the art of government but so much profit to themselves. The history of the Troglodites has recorded some of their wise and witty sayings.

One of them was told, that by the great decay of trade the principal bank of the city would be broke. What care I, said she, I have lain my money out in land.

Another was warn'd, that if better measures were not taken, the Troglodites threaten'd to revolt; I am glad to hear it, replied she, for if we

beat them, there will some rich confiscations fall to me.

LETTER XXIII.

SELIM to MIRZA.

PAINFUL experience had, by this time, taught the Troglodites what their fathers were too happy to suspect, that human nature was not perfect enough to be trusted with excessive power: they saw an evident necessity of restraining that which had been given to their Kings, as well for the dignity of the crown itself, as for the good of the commonwealth.

The whole nation unanimously concur'd in this resolution, and that unanimity could not be resisted: they therefore consider'd by what means to reform their government, and did it with equal vigour and moderation. It was decreed that the crown should be preserv'd to the prince then reigning, out of respect to the family he was of; but that he should wear it under certain limitations which divided his authority with the senate.

To prevent the mischiefs that might arise from evil ministers, and the too great power of any favourite, they declared, that the ministers of the King were the servants of the people, and could not be protected by the court, if they were found disloyal to the nation.

Under

Under these wise regulations the shatter'd state recover'd itself again : their affairs were manag'd with more discretion, and many publick grievances were redress'd. They thought that in limiting their monarchy they had cut the root of all their evils, and flatter'd themselves with a permanent felicity. But they quickly discover'd that this new system was not without its inconveniencies. Very favourable opportunities were sometimes lost by the unavoidable slowness of their councils, and it was often necessary to trust more people with the secret of publick business, than could be relied on with security. There were many evils which the nature of their government oblig'd them to connive at, and which grew, as it were, out of the very root of it. The abuse of liberty was inseparable, in many points, from liberty itself, and degenerated into a shameless licentiousness. But the principal mischief attending on this change, was the division of the senate into parties. Different judgments, different interests and passions, were perpetually clashing with one another, and by the unequal motion of its wheels, the whole machine went but heavily along.

Yet one advantage arose from this disorder, that the people were kept alert, and upon their guard. The animosities and emulation of particulars, secured the commonwealth, as in a seraglio, the honour of the husband is preserved by

the malice of the eunuchs and mutual jealousies of the women.

Upon the whole, the Troglodites might have been happy in the liberty they had gained, if the same publick spirit which establish'd could have continu'd to maintain it.

LETTER XXIV.

S E L I M to M I R Z A.

TH E R E was in the senate a certain man of great natural cunning, and penetration, factious, enterprizing, vers'd in business, and above all, very knowing in the disposition of the times in which he lived. This man came secretly to the king, and entertain'd him with the following discourse.

‘ I perceive, Sir, you are very much cast down
 ‘ with the bounds that have been set to your au-
 ‘ thority: but perhaps you have not lost so much
 ‘ as you imagine.——The people are very
 ‘ proud of their own work, and look with great
 ‘ satisfaction on the outside of their new-erected
 ‘ government; but those who can see the inside
 ‘ too, find every thing too rotten and superficial to
 ‘ last very long.

‘ The two things in nature the most repug-
 ‘ nant and inconsistent with each other, are the
 ‘ love of liberty, and the love of money: the
 ‘ last is so strong among your subjects, that it
 ‘ is

' is impossible the former can subsist. I say, Sir,
 ' they are not honest enough to be free——Look
 ' round the nation, and see whether their man-
 ' ners agree with their constitution. Is there a
 ' virtue which want does not disgrace, or a vice
 ' which riches cannot dignify? Has not luxury
 ' infected all degrees of men amongst them?
 ' Which way is that luxury to be supported? It
 ' must necessarily create a dependance which will
 ' soon put an end to this dream of liberty. Have
 ' you a mind to fix your power on a sure and
 ' lasting basis? Fix it on the vices of mankind:
 ' set up private interest against publick; apply to
 ' the wants and vanities of particulars; shew
 ' those who lead the people, that they may bet-
 ' ter find their account in betraying than defend-
 ' ing them: this, Sir, is a short plan of such a
 ' conduct as would make you really superior to
 ' all restraint, without breaking in upon those
 ' nominal securities, which the Troglodites are
 ' more attach'd to a great deal than they are to
 ' the things themselves. If you please to trust
 ' the management to me, I shall not be afraid
 ' of being obnoxious to the spirit of liberty; for
 ' in a little while I will extinguish every spark of
 ' it; nor of being liable to the justice of the
 ' nation, for my crime itself shall be my pro-
 ' tection.'

LETTER XXV.

SELIM to MIRZA at Ispahan.

From London..

THERE is a very pretty, fair-complexion'd girl, who lodges in a house just over against me. She was always staring at me from her window, and seem'd to solicit my regards by a thousand little airs that I can't describe, but which touch'd me still more than all her beauty: at last I became so enamoured of her, that I resolved to demand her in marriage. Accordingly I went to visit her in form, and was receiv'd by her mother, a widow gentlewoman, who desired very civilly to know my business.

Madam, said I, I have a garden at Ispahan, adorn'd with the finest flowers in the East: I have the Persian Jasmin, the Indian Rose, the Violet of Media, and the Tulip of Candahar: but I have lately beheld an English Lilly more fair than all these, and far more sweet, which I desire to transplant into my garden. This Lilly, Madam, is now in your possession, and I come a suppliant to you that I may obtain it. The old lady, not conceiving what I meant, began to assure me very faithfully that I was mistaken, for she had neither Lilly nor Rose belonging to her.

The Lilly, return'd I, is your lovely daughter, whom I come to ask of you for my wife.

What

What do you propose to settle on her, replied she? That is the first point to be consider'd.—

I will do by her very handsomly, answer'd I; I will settle upon her——two black eunuchs, an old midwife, and a chambermaid.

Two blacks, answer'd she, are well enough, but I should think two French footmen would be genteeler.

However, Sir, we won't quarrel about her equipage: the question is, what provision you think of making.—

Don't trouble yourself about that, return'd I,—she shall have meat enough, I warrant you; plenty of rice, and the best sherbet in all Persia.

Don't tell me of rice and sherbet, said the old woman; I ask what jointure you will give her?

This word stopp'd me short, for I did not know what a jointure signified: at last she explain'd herself, by demanding of me, how her daughter was to live if I should die?

I have an Indian wife, answer'd I, that intends to burn herself as soon as I expire, but I would not recommend that method to your daughter.

How! said she——you are married then already! Yes, said I, in Persia we are allow'd to take as many women as we can keep, and it seems to me that the men in England do the same, only leaving out the ceremony.

It is a very wicked practice, answer'd she,—but since it is your religion so to do, and that my daughter's fortune is too small to get a husband among Christians, I am not much averse to give her to you upon reasonable terms, because I am told you are very rich.

She had scarce spoke these words, when my little mistress, who had been list'ning to our discourse behind the screen, came out from her concealment, and told her mother, that if so many women were to live together she was sure there would be no peace in the family, and therefore she desired her to insist on a good separate maintainance, in case her husband and she should disagree.

What, said I, young lady, do you think already of separating your interests from mine? And must I be obliged to pay my wife for living ill with me, as much as I should for living well?

No ——— by Heli ——— I will never wed a woman who is so determin'd to rebel against her husband, that she articles for it in the very contract of her marriage. ———

L E T T E R XXVI.

SELIM to MIRZA at Isfahan.

From London.

THERE is at London a native of Aleppo, that has resided here some years as a private agent for some merchants of that city, and passes for a Jew: they call him Zabulon, but his true name is Abdallah, the son of Abderamen. He has revealed himself to me, and I have contracted a great intimacy with him. There never was an honefter, more friendly, or more valuable man: but he is as much a bigot to all the eastern notions, and as much a stranger to every thing in England, as he was the first hour of his arrival. For my part, Mirza, I set out with a resolution to give up all my hereditary prejudices, and form my mind to bear different opinions, as my body to suffer different climates. Nay, if I may say so, I begun my travels a good while before I went abroad, by reading, enquiring, and reasoning, about the manners and institutions of other countries. I had lived long enough under the yoke of an arbitrary government, to see the misery of it, and value liberty: I am now come into an island where that liberty is happily established, and where I may learn to know it by its effects. This, Mirza, is the study that I pursue, and it demands the utmost attention I can give.

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give. In absolute monarchies all depends on the character of the prince, and when that is known, you have little more to learn; but in mix'd governments the machine is more complex, and it requires a nicer observation to understand how the springs of it are dispos'd, or how they mutually check and assist each other.

When I talk to Abdallah on this subject, he tells me it is not worth my while to trouble myself about it; for that any form of government is good, if it be well administer'd. But the question is, which is most likely to be well administer'd, that is, which has best secured itself, by wholesome provisions and restraints, against the danger of a bad administration.

LETTER XXVII.

S E L I M to M I R Z A at Ispahan.

From London:

AS I was walking in the fields near this city the other morning, a disbanded soldier somewhat in years implored my charity, and, to excite my compassion, bared his bosom, on which were the scars of many wounds, all received in the service of his country. I gladly relieved his wants, and being desirous to inform myself of every thing, fell into discourse with him on the war in which he had served. He told me he had been present at the taking of ten or twelve strong towns,

towns, and had a share in the danger and glory of almost as many victories. How then, said I, comes it to pass that you are laid aside? Thy strength is indeed in its decline, but not yet wasted; and I should think that experience would well supply the loss of youth. Alas! Sir, answered he, I have a good heart, and tolerable limbs, but I want three inches more of stature: I am brave and able enough, thank God, but not quite handsome enough for a soldier.

How then didst thou serve so long? returned I. In Flanders, Sir, said he, there were some thousands such ill-looking fellows, who did very well in day of battle, but would make no figure at a review——It appears to me very strange, reply'd I, that thou shouldest be poor after fighting so many years with such great success. The plunder of a single town in the east is enough to enrich every soldier that helped to take it. Plunder! Sir, said he; we have no such term in the modern art of war. We fight for sixpence a day.——But when you have gain'd a battle, do you get nothing by it?——Yes, said he, we have the advantage to go on and besiege a town.——Ay, then, my honest lad, comes your harvest.——Then, Sir, replied he, it defends itself till we are half of us destroy'd: and, when it can hold out no longer, it capitulates; that is, every burgher saves his house, and every soldier carries off his baggage.——But what becomes of the conquering army?——Why the conquering
army

army has the pleasure to besiege another town, which capitulates also; and at the end of the campaign it goes into quarters.—But when you enter an enemy's country, don't you raise contributions?—The generals do, answer'd he, but military discipline allows no part of it to the common soldiers; they have just sixpence a day as they had before.

Here ended our conversation; and I repeat it to thee, as one of the most extraordinary novelties I have met with in Europe. That armies, mercenary armies, should be led on from battle to battle, from siege to siege, without any thing to animate them but the hopes of a barren reputation, and a pay which is barely a subsistence; that they should be made to look upon the property of their enemies as sacred and inviolable; that they should return from a victorious campaign no richer than they set out, and take the field next year with as much alacrity as they did before, is such a wonder as history cannot shew. No such thing was ever heard of in Asia, nor do I know that the two other parts of the globe have any example of it. But all over Europe, except Muscovy and Turkey, it has been so for this last hundred years, and there has yet happened no mutiny on that account. It is no less unaccountable that valour, and a capacity for service should be made to consist in smug looks and a certain degree of tallness. If Women were to raise and employ troops, I should not much wonder

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der at such a choice; but God grant our invincible Sultan an army of veteran soldiers, though there were not a man among them above five foot high, or a face that would not frighten an enemy with the very looks of it!

L E T T E R XXVIII.

SELIM to MIRZA at Ispahan.

THERE is a set of people in this country, whose activity is more useless than the idleness of a monk. They are like those troublesome dreams which often agitate and perplex us in our sleep, but leave no impression behind them when we wake. I have sent thee an epitaph made for one of these men of business, who ended his life and labours not long ago.

‘ Here lies ———, who lived three-
‘ score and ten years in a continual hurry. He
‘ had the honour of sitting in six parliaments,
‘ of being chairman in twenty five committees,
‘ and of making three hundred and fifty speeches.
‘ He attended constantly twice a week at the
‘ levies of twelve different ministers of state;
‘ and writ for and against them one thousand
‘ papers. He composed fifty new projects for
‘ the better government of the church and state.
‘ He left behind him memoirs of his own life in
‘ five volumes in folio.

‘ Reader,

‘ Reader, if thou should’st be moved to drop
 ‘ a tear for the loss of so considerable a person, it
 ‘ will be a singular favour to the deceased ; for
 ‘ no body else concerns himself about it, or re-
 ‘ members that such a man was ever born.’

L E T T E R XXIX.

S E L I M to M I R Z A at Ispahan.

From London.

I Went with my friend the other day to a great hall, where all the courts of law were sitting together : behold, said he, the temple of justice, the sanctuary of privilege and right, which our mightiest monarchs have not been able to violate with impunity. Behold the lowest of our commons contending here with the highest of our nobles, unawed by their dignity or power. See those venerable sages on the bench, whose ears are deaf to sollicitation, and their hands untainted with corruption. See also those twelve men, whom we call the Jury, the great bulwark of our property and freedom. But then cast your eyes on those men in black that swarm on every side : these are the priests of the temple, who, like other priests, have turned their ministry into a trade : they have perplexed, confounded, and incumbred law, in order to make themselves more necessary, and to drain the purses of the people. — I have heard, said I, that the laws

laws of England are wisely framed and impartially administered. The old Gothick pile we are now in, replied my friend, will give you a just idea of their structure: the foundations of it are deep and very lasting; it has stood many ages, and with good repairs may stand many more; but the architecture is loaded with a multiplicity of idle and useless parts; when you examine it critically, many faults and imperfections will appear; yet upon the whole it has a mighty awful air, and strikes you with reverence and respect. Then as to the administration of our laws, the difference between us and other countries is little more than this, that there they sell justice in the gross, and here we sell it by retail. In Persia the Cadi passes sentence for a round sum of money; in England the judge indeed takes nothing after he comes to be a judge; but the attorney, the advocate, every officer and retainer on the court, raise treble that sum upon the client. The condition of justice is like that of many women of quality: they themselves are above being bought, but every servant about them must be feed, or their is no getting at them. The disinterested spirit of the lady is of no advantage to the suitor; he is undone by the rapine of her dependants.

LETTER XXX.

SELIM to MERZA at Ispahan.

WHAT is peculiar to this country, continued he, in judicial proceedings, is, that no power of equity is lodged either in the breast of judge or jury, but they are to direct and determine altogether by the letter of the law.

In France, and other parts of Europe, the judge is trusted with a discretionary power to vary from the law in certain points, according to the dictates of his conscience, and the reason of the case. But in England, conscience, reason, right, and justice are confin'd to the words of the act of parliament, and the established sense thereof.

No doubt this is productive of many hardships; particulars must often suffer by it; yet in the main it is a wholesome limitation, and beneficial to liberty. For it is generally found, that in other countries the judge's conscience depends wholly on the king's, and the rule of equity is a very uncertain measure, which passion, prejudice, or interest can change: so that many of the grievances we complain of in the course of justice here, are interwoven with the constitution of our government, and not to be removed without endangering, or, perhaps, destroying it. Latter times have gone off a little from this strictness
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of adhering to the letter, by encouraging applications to the court of chancery, which is a court of equity, but tied down to certain regular methods of proceeding, and as close a conformity to the known meaning and purpose of the law as is consistent with its institution. The business of this court is vastly greater than formerly it was. Anciently the chancellor himself was nothing more than register to the King, with a power to advise him in such matters as came within the compass of the writings entrusted to his custody: but by degrees he became keeper of the great seal, and the highest officer of the realm. And indeed if there was not placed in the house of peers a judicature superior to his, so much of the property of the subject would depend on the opinion of the chancellor, that the parliament would have reason to claim a right which they demanded in the reign of Edward the Third, of nominating this officer themselves.

I desired to know how the lords behaved in this ultimate trial of all causes.

With great caution and uprightness, answered he: the spirit of party, or the influence of the court, has not yet mixed itself in their decisions; and happy will it be for this country if they are as scrupulous in every capacity as they are in their judicial one.

LETTER XXXI.

SELIM to MIRZA at Ispahan.

From London.

A French gentleman was boasting the other day in a company where I was, of the academies founded by the late King for the support and reward of arts and sciences.

You have a pleasant way (said he) here in England, of encouraging a man of wit. When he is dead you build him a fine tomb, and lay him among your Kings; but while he is alive, he is as ill receiv'd at court, as if he came with a petition against the ministry. Would not the money you have laid out upon the monuments of two or three of your poets, have been better bestowed in giving them bread when they were living, and wanted it? This might have been formerly the case, replied an Englishman, but it is not so now. A man of true genius is at present so much favour'd by the publick, his works are so greedily bought up, and so many people fond of serving him every way, that he has no need to depend upon a court for protection and subsistence.

And let me add, that the honours which are paid to a deceas'd man of wit, have something in them more generous and disinterested, than pensions bestow'd on slavish terms, and at the price

price of continual panegyrick. We have a very great poet now alive, who may boast of one glory to which no member of the French academy can pretend, viz. that he never flatter'd any man in power; but has bestow'd immortal praises upon those, whom, for fear of offending men in power, no poet in France would have dared to praise.

L E T T E R XXXII.

SELIM to MIRZA at Ispahan.

From London.

THERE is a Christian Doctor, who at my first arrival here took the trouble to visit me very often, with no other view, as I could find, but merely to make a Christian of me; in which design he has been single hitherto, such a zeal being very much out of fashion.

But, what is most extraordinary, I was told the other day, that his preferment in the church had been lately stopp'd at the instance of the Mufti of this city, on a supposition of his being turn'd Mahometan, and that all the proof brought against him was the commerce he formerly had with me.

When I heard this, I waited on the Mufti, and offer'd to testify that he Doctor was a Christian, as far as I could judge by all I saw of him, during the time of our acquaintance: but he refused to admit my testimony in this case, because, as he

he said, I was myself a misbeliever, and insisted on the Doctor's suppos'd apostacy, as an undoubted fact, which shock'd him beyond measure.

If he is a Mussulman, said I, he must be circumcised: Why don't you end the dispute by shewing that? There is a visible mark of orthodoxy in our religion; but I should be glad to know what is the visible mark of yours. If it be meekness or charity, or justice, or temperance, or piety, all these are most conspicuous in the Doctor: but I find that none of these can prove him to be a Christian. ——— What therefore is the characteristick of his accusers? and how do they prove themselves to be Christians?

L E T T E R XXXIII.

• SELIM to MIRZA at Ispahan.

From London.

THE principles and practice of toleration prevail very strongly in this country: I myself have felt the effects of it very much to my advantage: the better sort of people are no more offended at the difference of my faith from theirs, than at the difference of my dress: the mob, indeed, seem surprized at me for both, and can't comprehend how it is possible to make such mistakes, but they rather condemn than hate me for them; and I have yet been affronted by nobody but a drunken priest, who denounced damnation

nation against me, for refusing to pledge him, to the prosperity of the church of England, in a liquor forbidden by our law.

This has not always been the temper of the English. They have formerly waged war against Mahometans, only because they were so; they have kindled fires against Hereticks, though what was heresy in one age has been orthodoxy in another; nay, they have involved their country in all the miseries of civil discord upon points of no greater moment, than whether a table ought to be placed in the middle of the church, or at one end of it.

I must own to thee, Mirza, there is nothing I abhor so much as persecution: it seems to me no less ridiculous in its principles, than dreadful in its effects. One would think, that the great diversity of opinions among mankind, should incline men a little to suspect that their own may possibly be wrong; but to pursue all others with rage and violence, instead of pity or persuasion, is such a strain of pride and folly as enthusiasm itself can scarce account for. I have read, in a famous Spanish author, of a certain madman who rambled about Spain with sword and lance, and whomsoever he met with in his way he required to acknowledge and believe, that his mistress Dulcinea del Toboso was the handsomest woman in the world. It was in vain for the other to reply, that he had no knowledge at all of Dulcinea, or had a particular fancy to another

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woman;

woman; the madman made no allowances for ignorance or prejudice, but instantly knock'd him down, and never left beating him till he promised to maintain the perfections of the said lady above all her rivals. Such has been the conduct of many priests and priest-rid princes in propagating their spiritual inclinations: each had his several Dulcinea, and resolved that every body should admire her as much as himself; but as this was not easily brought about, the controversy was determin'd by force of arms: nay, though it happened that all admir'd the same, they would even quarrel about the fashion of her cloaths, and most bloody battles have been fought to decide which colour became her best. Alas, Mirza, how absurd is all this! The beauty of true religion is sufficiently shewn by its proper lustre; it needs no knight-errant to combat for it; nor is any thing so contrary to the nature of affection as constraint. Whoever is compell'd to profess a faith without conviction, tho' it was but indifferent to him before, must grow to think it odious; as men who are forced to marry where they do not approve, soon change dislike into aversion.— I will end this subject with putting thee in mind of a ceremony which is celebrated once a year by the common people of Persia, in honour of our prophet Ali. There are two bulls brought forth before the crowd, the strongest of which is called Ali, and the weaker Osman: they are made to fight, and as Ali is very sure to get the better,

better, the spectators go away highly satisfied with this happy decision of the dispute between us and the heretical Turks.

Just in this light I regard all religious wars. Whether the combatants are two bulls or two bishops, the case is exactly the same, and mankind are as simple to concern themselves for the one as for the other.——

L E T T E R XXXIV.

SELIM to MIRZA at Ispahan.

From London.

THERE is nothing more astonishing to a Mussulman than many particulars relating to the state of matrimony, as it is managed in Europe: our practice of it is so totally different, that we can hardly think it possible for men to do or suffer such things as happen here every day.

The following story, which was given me for a true one, will set this in a very full light: I wish thou may'st find it as entertaining, as I am sure thou wilt find it new.——

In the reign of Charles the First, King of England, lived two gentlemen, whose true names I will conceal under the feign'd ones of Acasto and Septimius. They were neighbours, their estates lay together, and they had a friendship for each other, which had grown up from their earliest youth.

Acasto had an only son, whom we will call Polydore, and Septimius an only daughter, named Emilia. Though the boy was but fourteen years old, and the girl but twelve; the parents were so desirous of contracting an alliance between their families, and of uniting the two bordering estates, that they married them before either was of age to consummate the marriage, or even to understand the nature of their contract. As soon as the ceremony was perform'd, they sent the young gentleman abroad, to finish his education.

After four years which he had spent in France and Italy, he was recall'd by the news of his father's death, which made it necessary for him to return to England.

Emilia, who was now about sixteen, begun to think he had been absent long enough, and received him with a great deal of satisfaction. She had heard a fine character of him, from those who knew him in his travels; and when she saw him, his person was so improv'd, that she thought herself the happiest of women in being his wife.

But his sentiments for her were very different.

There was in his temper a spirit of contradiction, which could not bear to have a wife imposed upon him.——He complain'd, that his father had taken advantage of his tender age, to draw him into an engagement, in which his judgment could possibly have no part. He confessed that he had no objections to the person or character

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character of Emilia ; but insisted on a liberty of choice, and declar'd that he look'd upon his marriage to be forc'd and null. In short, he absolutely refused to consummate, in spite of all the endeavours of their friends, and the conjugal affection of the poor young lady, who did her utmost to vanquish his aversion.——When she found that all her kindness was thrown away, the natural pride of her sex made her desire to be separated from him, and she join'd with him in a petition for a divorce. The first parliament of the year forty was then sitting: the affair was brought before them, and it was believed, that a divorce would have easily been obtain'd at their mutual demand. But the bishops opposed it with great violence, as a breach of the law of God, which they said would admit of no divorce, but in cases of adultery. They were answered, that the marriage was not compleat; and that the ceremonious part, which was all that had past between them, might as properly be dispensed with by the legislature, as any other form of law. That the young gentleman's aversion was invincible, and inconsistent with the obligation laid upon him: that therefore it would not well become the fathers of the church, to put him under a manifest temptation of committing adultery; and that nothing could be imagined more unjust, than to condemn the lady to perpetual virginity, under the notion of a marriage, which, it was plain, was a mere illusion——These arguments

seem'd convincing to all the world except the bishops; but they persisted in their usual unanimity, and were so powerful by the favour of the court, that they carried their point in the house of lords; and the unfortunate Polydore and Emilia were declared to be one flesh, though no union had ever been between them, either in body or in mind. — The husband immediately paid back his wife's portion to her father; and firmly resolved that from that time forwards he would never see her more. His natural obstinacy was irritated by the constraint that was put upon him, and he took a pride to shew the world that there was no power, ecclesiastical or civil, which could oblige him to act like a married man against his inclination. The poor lady retir'd to a seat of her father's in the country, and endeavoured by long absence from her husband to forget that he had ever pleased or offended her. — Two years afterwards the civil war broke out between the king and parliament. Polydore was so enraged against the bishops, for obstructing his divorce, that it determined him in chusing of his party, and made him take up arms against the king. Septimius, the father of Emilia, was as zealous a royalist, to which his hatred of Polydore contributed as much as any thing; for it was hardly possible that two such bitter enemies should be of the same side. In the course of the war, the king being worsted, the estates of many of his party were confiscated; and Septimius having
been

been one of the most active, was also one of those that suffered most. He was compelled to retire into France with what he could save out of the wreck of his estate; and carried with him his daughter, who was quite abandon'd by her husband and his family.

In the mean while, the army of the parliament begun to form itself into different factions: Cromwell, at the head of the Independants, acquired by degrees such an influence, that the Presbyterians were no longer a match for him: Polydore, who was devoted to that sect, threw up his commission in discontent; and happily for his reputation had no share in those violent proceedings, which ended in the destruction of the King, and the ancient constitution.

He continued quite unactive for some years; but at last, growing weary of a life that agreed so ill with his vivacity, he determin'd to go and serve in the Low-Countries, under the great Prince of Condé, who in the year 1654 commanded the armies of Spain against his country.—Two reasons inclined Polydore to this party; first, the desire he had to learn his trade under a general of so great reputation; and, secondly, because Cromwell had refused to enter into an alliance with that prince, though most agreeable to the interests of England. He found his Highness employ'd in besieging Arras, and was receiv'd by him with high marks of his esteem. During the siege he often signaliz'd his courage, and support-

ed the opinion that was spread all over Europe of the valour of the Parliament-Officers. But the Marshal Turenne, with La Ferté and Hoquincourt, having attack'd the besiegers in their lines, relieved Arras, and would have destroy'd the Spanish army if the Prince of Condé had not saved them by a retreat, which was one of the greatest actions of his life. In this battle, Polydore was taken prisoner, and sent to Paris with many other Spanish officers, to continue there till they should be ransom'd or exchange'd. In the journey, he contracted a great intimacy with the Count d'Aguilar, Brigadier under the Count de Fuenfaldagna, and one of the first gentlemen in Spain. As they travelled together several days, they very naturally acquainted one another with the principal incidents of their lives. Polydore related to Aguilar the whole story of his marriage with Emilia, and declaimed with great heat against the folly of tying two people thus together, who wish'd nothing so much as to be loose.

No doubt, said the count, it is most absurd; but, to say the truth, I find nothing very reasonable in the whole affair of marriage as we have made it. I don't know what it may be to other men, but to me it seems horribly unnatural, to be confined to any single woman, let her be ever so agreeable.

If I had chose a woman freely, answer'd Polydore, I could be always constant to her with pleasure; but to have a companion for life forc'd upon

upon me, I had rather row in the gallies than submit to it.

You are mistaken, my dear Polydore, replied the Count, in fancying it so easy to be constant even to a wife of one's own chusing, I have had some experience of that kind, and know that the first choice is only good till we have made a second.

To prove this to you, I need only give you the history of my amours——That you may not think I am telling you a romance, I will begin where romances always end, with the article of my marriage. I was married at four and twenty to a lady, whom I chose for her beauty and good sense, without troubling myself about her fortune, which was but small. The three or four first years that we lived together, was the happiest period of my life: I preserv'd all the ardour of a lover with the freedom and tenderness of a husband. She loved me still more fondly than I did her; and if I had not left her till she gave me occasion, I believe I should have been constant to this day.——But I was not able to hold out any longer: all her charms were become so familiar to me, that they could not make the least impression; and I went regularly to her bed as I did to supper, with an appetite quite pall'd by too much plenty. In this dull way I drudged on for a tedious twelvemonth, till the sight of a relation of my wife's, who came opportunely to lodge in my own house, rouz'd me out of my lethargy.

It was a beautiful creature of eighteen, just taken out of a convent to be married. She knew nothing of the world, but had a natural quickness that went further than experience. However, as there was something a little awkward in her exterior carriage, the Countess d'Aguilar thought it proper to keep her with her for some time before her marriage, till she had instructed her how to behave herself in publick. I thought my instructions might be of use to her as well as my wife's, to teach her how to behave herself in private; and had the good fortune to make them more agreeable.

She liked me better and better every lesson, and in proportion, as her passion encreased for me, she conceiv'd a stronger aversion for the man who was design'd to be her husband: and indeed she had no great reason to be fond of him, for he was a peevish, stupid, bigotted old fellow, who did nothing day or night but pray and scold. Her friends press'd the conclusion of her marriage, and as unwilling as she was to come into it, she could not resist their importunities. Yet to comfort me, she very fairly let me know, that she would give her virginity to me in spite of all their teeth; and moreover, that I should have it on the wedding night. I represented to her the improbability of her performing such a promise at such a time; but she bid me trust to her management, and I should be satisfied.

The

The wedding-night came; and when the company was retired, the bridegroom was surpriz'd to see the bride dissolved in tears. He beg'd to know the cause of her affliction? but she would not tell him, except he swore that when he knew it, he would do his utmost to remove it.

The poor man, in the vehemence of his love, assured her that he would do any thing to make her easy, that was not contrary to the honour of a cavalier, or the injunctions of our holy mother church.

No, said she, the thing I require of you will recommend you extremely to the church, as it is only to give me leave to accomplish a vow I made to the blessed Virgin, in a fit of sickness, when my life was in great danger.

Heaven forbid, my pretty child, reply'd the Don, that I should hinder you from performing a sacred vow, to the hazard of your soul.

Well then, said she, I will own to you, that in my fright I vow'd that if I could but get well again, and live to be married, I would consecrate my wedding night to the blessed Virgin, by passing it in the bed of my waiting woman, the virtuous Isabella. And this very morning while I slept, our lady appear'd to me in a dream, and threaten'd me with another fit of sickness if I did not keep my word.

If it be so, reply'd the husband, there is no doubt but the Virgin must be serv'd before me; and so, my dear, I wish you a good night.

Now

Now you must know that the virtuous Isabella was trusted with all the secrets of her mistress, and had gone between us through the whole course of our amour.

Accordingly madam went to bed to her waiting woman, who had taken care to inform me of this design, and conceal'd me in a closet within her chamber; from whence, as soon as every body was asleep, I was admitted to the place of Isabella, and receiv'd the full acquittance of a promise I little expected to see perform'd.—

The singularity of this adventure so delighted me, that I could not help, in the vanity of my heart, discovering it to the Duke de l'Infantada, the most intimate of my friends. He was very thankful for the confidence I repos'd in him, and to reward me for it, betray'd it instantly to my wife, whom, it seems, he had long made love to without success. As he thought that the greatest obstacle to his desires was her fondness for me, he hoped to remove it by convincing her of my falseness; but though the news of it had like to have broke her heart, it was not capable to change it.

She reproach'd me in a manner that made my fault appear much more inexcusable.—I might complain, said she, of the affront you have done my honour, in debauching my relation; but alas! I am only sensible to the injury you have done my love. You are grown weary of me, and I know it is impossible to regain your heart, since the single reason of your dislike must still continue,
which

which is, that I am your wife. If any part of my behaviour had offended you, I might have chang'd it to your satisfaction; but this is a fault, which in spite of all my care, will grow worse every day.—I endeavour'd to pacify her by assurances of my future fidelity; and really I was so affected by her behaviour, that I seriously meant to keep my word.—But our inclinations are very little in our power: my resolution soon yielded to the charms of the countess Altamira, one of the handsomest women about the court, but the vainest, the most interested, and the most abandon'd. She made it a point of honour to seduce me, out of a desire to mortify my wife, with whom she had quarrel'd upon some female competition of precedency or dress.

Her avarice was equal to her pride, and she made me pay dearly for her favours, though her husband was one of the richest men in Spain. I hardly ever went to her without a present of some kind or other, and my fortune begun to suffer by my expence; yet I was so bewitch'd to her, that though I heartily despis'd her, I could not help loving her to madness.

One day, when I came to see her after an absence that had raised my desires to the highest pitch, she receiv'd me with a sullenness and ill-humour that tortur'd me beyond expression. I conjur'd her to acquaint me with the cause of it, and she told me, that the last time she was at court, she had seen the countess d'Aguilar with a
diamond

diamond necklace on, which I had given her the day before : that my making such presents to another woman, in the midst of our intrigue, was an insult she was determin'd not to bear ; and that, since I was grown so fond a husband, she could not but make a conscience of disturbing our conjugal felicity.

I offer'd her any satisfaction she would ask ; and the malicious devil had the impudence to tell me, that nothing could satisfy her, but my taking away that necklace from my wife, and giving it to her.—I entreated her to accept another of twice its value ; but she replied, that her honour was concern'd, and in short she would have that, and that alone.—Overcome with her importunities, I went home, and stole it for her ; but made her promise me solemnly to be very cautious that my wife should never see it in her possession.

About three days after, word was brought me, that the Countess d'Aguilar had fainted away in the anti-chamber of the Queen, and was gone home in great disorder to her mother's the Countess of Pacheco.

I went immediately thither in such a fright, as convinc'd me I lov'd her better than I thought I did ; but imagine my confusion, when she inform'd me, that she had fainted at the sight of her own diamonds on the neck of the Countess Altamira. She added, that it was no mystery to her, nor to any body else, how that lady came by them ; and that, to save herself the mortification

cation of any more such publick affronts, she would no longer live with me as my wife, but leave me at full liberty to please myself, as my licentious inclination should direct.

I used my utmost eloquence to prevail on her to come home to me again; but she remained inflexible, and said no more to all my protestations, but that if her past conduct had not been able to fix my heart, she despair'd of doing it for the future.

After living without her half a year, I was ordered to my regiment in Flanders, and was very glad of an occasion to leave Madrid, where the regret of her separation was such a pain to me, that it entirely sunk my spirits. Since my arrival in the army, I have writ to her three or four letters, but she disdain'd to make me any answer; and I have reason to believe, that her high spirit has, by this time, got the better of her love.

For my part, I endeavour to amuse myself the best I can with other women; and I desire, my dear Polydore, that we may be always reciprocal confidants of every intrigue that we engage in during our stay in France. —

Polydore thank'd him, and assured him, that on his part, he should meet with no reserve. When they came to Paris, his first care was to enquire, what was become of Septimius and Emilia, whom he had heard no account of for many years: he was inform'd, that Septimius
was

was dead, and his daughter gone from Paris. His curiosity made him write to his friends in England, to ask if she was there ; they answer'd him, that every body believed she was dead in France, having receiv'd no news of her a great while. Polydore was mightily pleas'd with this account, and fancy'd himself very happy in being a widower, though he had given himself no trouble to support the character of a husband.— The two friends had not resided long at Paris, before they were exchange'd for some French officers, who were taken prisoners by the Prince of Condé. They return'd to the army, but the season not permitting them to come to any action, they agreed to pass the winter at Brussels, in the court of the Archduke. They had not been there above a month, before Aguilar acquainted his English friend, that he had begun an intrigue with a French lady, who liv'd in a very retired manner, which he believ'd was owing to her circumstances : that he had seen her two or three times, by means of a woman at whose house she lodg'd, whose good offices he had secured by a handsome bribe. He added, that he would carry Polydore to see her the next visit that he made. Accordingly they went together to Mademoiselle Dalincourt (for that was the name of Aguilar's new mistress.) At their coming in, Dalincourt seem'd much surpriz'd, changed colour, and was not able to speak a word. The Count, alarmed at her disorder, suspected some lover had been with

with her, and told her, with an air of discontent, that he was sorry he came at so wrong a time. She endeavour'd to shake off her confusion, and reply'd, that he was always very welcome: but that the gentleman he brought with him had so much resemblance of a brother of her's, who was kill'd in Flanders, that at first sight she could not help being struck with it in the manner they had seen: she added, that if the gentleman was as like her brother in mind, as he was in form, she should be mightily pleased with his acquaintance. She spoke this with such an air of sincerity, that the Count began to think his jealousy was without foundation.

After some general discourse, she applied to Polydore, and asked him how long he had been engag'd in the Spanish service, with many other more particular enquiries, which seem'd to intimate a desire to know him better. Polydore was very glad of it, in hopes to serve his friend; and the Count, who had no suspicions on that side, did his utmost to engage them in a friendship which he imagined would turn to his advantage.

At night, when the two gentlemen were at home together, Aguilar ask'd his companion, what he thought of Dalincourt's person and understanding? Better of the last than the first, answered he, tho' both are certainly agreeable. I can't help thinking, continued he, that her person is not quite new to me; but I can't recollect

lect where I met with her, except it was at Paris, when I was there a boy.—You will do well to improve your acquaintance now, replied the Count; and, to give you an opportunity of doing it, I'll send you there to-morrow to make my excuses for being obliged to hunt with the Archduke, instead of waiting upon her, as I intended. I know my dear Polydore will employ all his wit and eloquence to set his friend's passion in the best light, and while he is with her, I shall have less uneasiness in being away. Polydore promised him all the services he could do him, but said, he wished he had got a mistress too, to make the party even.

The next day he went to her, and said a great deal in praise of Aguilar, to discover what she thought of him: she answer'd him with terms of a cold esteem, but nothing that gave him the least encouragement to believe she was in love. He then endeavour'd to persuade her of the violence of the Count's passion for her; but she assured him, that this was the only subject she did not care to hear him talk of.—He return'd to his friend quite discouraged at her manner of proceeding, and told him there was nothing to be hoped for. The Count shewed him a letter he had just receiv'd from his confidante, the lady of the house; which advis'd him not to think of gaining Dalincourt by a timorous respect; but to offer her at once a handsome settlement, which the streightness of her fortune would make her listen

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listen to much more kindly than she did to his fine speeches.

This indeed may do something, said Polydore; for I found by her discourse, that she had been reduced, by a series of misfortunes, to a condition very much beneath her birth.—In conclusion, they agreed to make a trial, whether she was to be bought or not; and Polydore was made the bearer of a letter which contain'd a very liberal proposal. She read it, look'd at Polydore some time without saying a word, and at last burst out into a flood of tears.

I thought, said she, recovering her voice, that it had not been in the power of my ill destiny to make me more unhappy: but I now find, that my misfortunes have sunk me lower than I ever was aware of, since two gentlemen, whose esteem I wished to gain, think so meanly of me, as to imagine me a proper person to receive such a letter. But know, Sir, that I am as much a stranger to infamy, as I am to happiness; and have a spirit superior to all the wrongs that your insolent sex can put upon me. Had not you disgrac'd yourself by the scandalous employment of endeavouring to seduce me with a dirty bribe, I should have been happy in seeing you often here; but must now desire you to trouble me no more, and to tell your friend, as my answer to his letter, that I would sooner give myself to a footman, than sell myself to a Prince.

Polydore

Polydore was infinitely struck with this reception: every word she utter'd pierc'd him to the heart; and he look'd upon her as a miracle of virtue, such as he never had any notion of before.—He return'd to the Count in great confusion, and acquainted him with the ill success of his commission. Aguilar, more in love with her than ever, writ a most submissive letter to beg her pardon, but she instantly sent it back unopen'd. When he found all his courtship was ineffectual, he left Brussels in despair, and retired to a villa of one of his friends, where he resolved to stay till the opening of the campaign. In the mean while Polydore, who continued still at Brussels, was in a situation little easier than his friend. Mademoiselle Dalincourt took up all his thoughts; he repeated to himself a thousand times the last words he heard her speak, and admired the spirit that appeared in them to a degree of adoration.

Not being able to bear her absence any longer, he sent to beg that he might see her once again, upon a business wholly relating to himself. She admitted him, and begun the conversation, by strictly forbidding him to name the Count in any thing he had to say to her.—I have no inclination to name him, replied he, for I would willingly forget that I ever knew him. I am sensible that I wrong him, in declaring to you, that I love you more than life; yet, as his passion is quite destitute of hope, why should not I solicit you
for

for a heart to which he has no pretensions? But, be my conduct right or not in regard to him, to you, Madam, it shall ever be most honourable. I come to offer you my whole fortune upon such terms, as your virtue need not blush at. I am a widower, and free to marry whom I please; my estate is sufficient for us both, and I am happy to think it in my power, to raise you to that rank which you were born to. This, Madam, is the only reparation by which I can atone for the affront I did your character; and, if you refuse to accept of it, my despair will be equal to my love.——

The lady answer'd him with blushes, that she was highly sensible of the sentiments he express'd for her; that she lik'd his person, and admir'd his understanding; but that, to her misfortune, she was married already; and therefore could say nothing to his proposal.——Good heaven, cried Polydore, you are married! And who then is your husband? The most unworthy of mankind, answer'd she; one who has abandon'd me to the malice of my fortune, and does not know at this time what is become of me, nor trouble himself about it.——He is indeed unworthy, replied the lover, who is possess'd of such a treasure, and can neglect it. But, Madam, employ me in your revenge: command my sword to pierce the monster's heart, and tear it from his bosom.——No, said she, your safety is more dear to me than the desire of revenge. All I ask

ask of you is, to swear that you will never be like that husband; but continue to love me equally when you know me better: upon this condition, I will grant you all the favours which my duty will allow, and, perhaps, your future conduct may prevail upon me to throw off all restraint.—

The happy Polydore swore every thing she desired, and she permitted him to see her when he pleas'd; but being inform'd, by him, of the treachery of her friend at whose house she lodg'd, they agreed to make their appointments at another place.

They continued this commerce for some time without any interruption, till the Count d'Aguilar had notice of it from his confidant, who perceived it in spite of all their caution.

Never was rage equal to his at this discovery. He writ to Polydore, reproaching him with his breach of friendship, in the bitterest terms, and required him to meet him with his sword behind the walls of a nunnery that was situated about two leagues out of Brussels. Polydore accepted of the challenge, and met him at the place appointed: he attempted to justify himself, but the Count had not the patience to hear him out: they fought with great fury a good while, till the fortune of Polydore prevailed, and the Count fainted away with the loss of blood from two or three wounds which he had received. The other seeing him fall, thought him dead, and made off with the utmost precipitation.

Just

Just at this instant came by a coach and six, which was driving towards the nunnery : a lady who was in it, seeing a gentleman lie weltring in his blood, stopp'd her coach, and went to try if she could assist him : at the sight of the face she fetch'd a scream, and fell upon the body in a swoon. Her servants concluding it was some body she was much concern'd for, carried them both into the nunnery, where the lady soon came to herself, and the Count also begun to shew signs of life, his spirits being agitated by the motion. He was immediately put to bed, and a surgeon sent for, who declared his wounds to be dangerous, but not mortal. While they continued uncertain of his cure, the lady who brought him into the nunnery waited constantly, day and night, at his bed-side, and nursed him with a care that would not yield to a moment of repose. As her face was always covered with a veil, he took her to be one of the nuns, and was astonish'd at a charity so officious. When he grew better his curiosity increased, and he ardently press'd her to let him know to whom he ow'd such great obligations. Are you a nun, Madam ? said he : I hope you are not ; for it would afflict me infinitely, if I was never to see you more, after leaving a house where you have done me so many favours.—

The lady for whom you fought, answered she, will make you soon forget the loss of me ; and though I am not a nun, you will never see me out of the limits of these walls.

How,

How, Madam! said he, was you not out of them, when you found me on the ground, and saved my life?

Yes, replied she; I was returning from a visit to a convent in the town: but I will take care not to stir from hence while you are at Brussels, because you are the man in the world I would avoid.

This speech so surpriz'd him, that for some time he was not able to make her any answer. At last he told her, that her actions and her words entirely disagreed, and that he could not think himself so hateful to her as she said, when he reflected how kindly she had used him.

These riddles shall be cleared to you, answer'd she, when you are perfectly recovered: till then content yourself with knowing that I cannot hate you, but am as much determined to avoid you, as if I could.

Thus ended a conversation, which left the Count in a perplexity not to be described.

He saw her no more for a few days; but when she heard that his strength was quite return'd, she came to him one morning, and spoke thus:

‘ If you would know who she is that was so
‘ afflicted when your life was in danger; that
‘ nurs’d you so carefully in your illness; and is
‘ resolv’d to quit you for ever when you are
‘ well; think of your former gallantries at Madrid, of your present passion for a mistress that
‘ despises you, and your ingratitude to a wife that
‘ always

‘ always lov’d you ; think of all this, and you
 ‘ will not wonder any longer at my actions or
 ‘ my words. ——— Yes, Aguilar, I am that
 ‘ wife, whose fate it is to be acquainted with
 ‘ all your infidelities, and to sinart for all your
 ‘ follies.’

As she said this, she lifted up her veil, and shew’d the astonished Count a well-known face, which he little expected to have seen in Flanders. All the passions that can agitate the heart of man, shame, remorse, love, gratitude, esteem, invaded his in that moment. He threw himself at her feet, and with many tears implor’d her to forgive him.

She raised him, and assured him of her pardon, nay, more, of her affection : ‘ But my person,
 ‘ said she, I am determin’d shall be ever separate
 ‘ from you. I have had too many proofs of your
 ‘ inconstancy, to hope that any obligations can
 ‘ engage you : you will never be faithful to me
 ‘ alone, and I disdain to share you with another.
 ‘ It is happiness enough for me that I have been
 ‘ the instrument of preserving your life, though
 ‘ you risked it for the sake of another woman ;
 ‘ and all the return I ask of you is, to think of
 ‘ me sometimes with kindness, but never to at-
 ‘ tempt to see me more.’

Aguilar was on the rack to hear her talk in so resolute a stile ; but he flatter’d himself it was owing to her jealousy of Mademoiselle Dalincourt : being impatient to make her easy on that

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head,

head, he dispatched one of his servants with a letter, to acquaint that lady with his recovery. He beg'd her earnestly to come to him at the nunnery, and, if possible, to bring her lover along with her. Polydore had absconded a few days, till he heard that the Count was out of danger, after which he continued very publicly his addresses to Dalincourt.

While the messenger was bringing them to the nunnery, Aguilar demanded of his wife, by what accident she came into Flanders?

You know, said she, that after my discovery of your amour with the Countess Altamira, I retired to my mother's house, and remain'd there till your departure for the army.

Soon afterwards, I had the misfortune to lose my mother, and what particularly aggravated my grief, was the knowledge that her concern at your ill usage of me had hastened her death.

These afflictions made Madrid so uneasy to me, that I could not bear to stay in it any longer. Luckily about that time I receiv'd a letter from my cousin Donna Eugenia de Montalegre, a religious of this house, to inform me of her being elected Abbess: it instantly occur'd to me, that no place could be more proper for my retreat, than a monastery, of which she was the head: so, as soon as I could settle my affairs, I left Spain, and put myself into a pension under the government of Donna Eugenia; in which manner I have lived ever since.

She

She had scarce finish'd this account, when they were interrupted by the arrival of Polydore and Dalincourt. Madam d'Aguilar changed colour at the sight of her; but her husband embracing Polydore, assured him, that he no longer look'd upon him as a rival, but was glad to resign his mistress to a friend who so well deserv'd her. Then he related to him the manner in which his wife had tended and preserved him, and expressed so much gratitude, so much love, that if any thing could have shaken her resolution, this would certainly have done it.—Mademoiselle Dalincourt seem'd much affected at this relation, and told the Countess, she was infinitely concern'd that she had been the innocent cause of her husband's danger; but that she hoped this accident would be a means of making them happy for the future, and put an end to his infidelities, and her resentment.

My happiness too, added she, is now at stake; and I have need of your friendship to support me in a discovery which I tremble to begin, but which, in justice to my honour, I am obliged to delay no longer.

At these words she knelt down, and taking hold of Polydore's hand, ' Behold, said she, my
' dear husband, in that Dalincourt whom you
' have sworn to love eternally, behold your wife
' Emilia, that Emilia, whom you left a bride
' and a virgin at sixteen; whom you imagined

‘ dead, and who will not live a moment, if you
‘ refuse to acknowledge and receive her. —

‘ You cannot now complain that I am a wife
‘ imposed upon you; you chose me freely out
‘ of pure inclination; our parents had nothing
‘ to do in it; love only engaged us, and from
‘ love alone I desire to possess you. This is my
‘ claim, and if you are willing to allow it, I am
‘ blest to the height of all my wishes.’

Polydore gaz’d on her with a silent admiration;
he examined every feature over and over, then
throwing his arms round her neck, and almost
stifling her with kisses, ‘ Are you really Emilia,
‘ (cried he) and have I confirm’d my former
‘ marriage by a new choice, by a choice which
‘ I never will depart from, and which makes me
‘ the happiest of men? O my angel, what won-
‘ ders do you tell me! How is it possible that I
‘ find you here at Brussels, when I thought you
‘ in your grave? Explain all this to me, and let
‘ me know how much I wronged you formerly,
‘ that I may try to repair it all by my future
‘ conduct.’

Count Aguilar and his lady joining with him
in a desire to know her history, she related it as
follows.

The HISTORY of
POLYDORE and EMILIA.

YOU may remember, Polydore, that as soon as we were parted, I went to live in the country with my father, being ashamed to appear in publick after the affront your capricious aversion had put upon me.

My pride was deeply wounded, but with shame I own it, my love was the passion that suffered most. I was bred up to consider you as my husband; I had learned to love you from a child, and your person was so wonderfully agreeable, that I could not look upon you with indifference. Nay, such was my partiality in your favour, that I could not help admiring you for your spirit in asserting the freedom of your choice, and justified you in my heart for a proceeding which openly I was obliged to disapprove. In this wretched state of mind I remained some years, till the unfortunate event of the civil war depriv'd my father of his estate, and drove him out to seek refuge in a foreign country. We settled at Paris, where, with three or four thousand pounds, which we found means to carry off, part in money, and the rest of it in jewels, we maintain'd ourselves well enough in a private way, which pleased my melancholy better than any other. In this retreat, where we saw no company, but

two or three French women that lodg'd in the house with us, I amused myself with learning the French tongue, which I had some knowledge of before I came to France; and by speaking nothing else for three or four years, I became so very perfect in it, that it was difficult to discover by my accent that I was not born at Paris. I mention this, because it has since been of use to me, in making me pass more easily upon you for the French woman I personated.——The third year of our residence at Paris, my father became acquainted with a widow-lady, the true Madam Dalincourt, whose name has since made me full amends for many injuries I have to charge her with in the sequel of my story. This woman was a native of Brabant, but married a French gentleman, who dying young, left her in very narrow circumstances. She had a sister much younger than herself, but not so handsome, who liv'd with her at Paris.

My father was at that time near threescore, and the widow turn'd of forty; yet her charms were still powerful enough to engage him in a passion for her, which nothing but dotage could excuse. It went so far, that she drew him in to marry her, and to settle upon her three thousand pounds, leaving me no more than the worth of my own jewels, which scarce amounted to a thousand. But her avarice was not satisfied with all this. There was a French nobleman who had long courted me for a mistress, and not finding me so complying

complying as he wish'd, thought the best way was to buy me of my mother-in-law, whom he knew to be capable of such a bargain. He offered her a present of two thousand crowns to introduce him by night to my apartment. The wicked creature accepted of his bribe, and taking her opportunity when my father was gone into the country, brought him late one night into my chamber, where she imagined he would find me fast asleep. But it happened that I and Mademoiselle Du Fresne, the sister of Dalincourt, had been engaged in reading a romance, which kept us up beyond our usual hour; and as her room was on the other side of the house, not to disturb the family in passing through, she went to bed to me. The romance run so strongly in my head, that I could not sleep for thinking of it; and perceiving that the moon shone very brightly, I got up, slipp'd on a night-gown, and went out to take a walk in the garden that lay contiguous to my chamber. I had not been there above half an hour before I heard Du Fresne call out for help; and coming in to her assistance, saw my lover struggling with her at such advantage, that I was almost afraid I came too late. I joined my cries to her's, and the noise we made so alarm'd the Marquis, that he thought it best to retire as soon as possible; especially when he discover'd his mistake, and that my infamous mother-in-law had put him to bed to her own ugly sister instead of me.

But, to be reveng'd of her for what he took to be a design of imposing upon him, he reveal'd to us the part she had in this affair, and bid me tell her, that he did not think the enjoyment of Mademoiselle Du Fresne worth a quarter of the money he had given her.—After making this confession he went off, and was hardly got safe out of the house, when two or three of our servants came in to us to know what was the matter. The story soon reach'd my father's ears; and I was so angry at my step-mother for her intention against my honour, that in the heat of my passion I told him all that the Marquis had reveal'd; and Du Fresne confirm'd it; which imprudence we had both reason to repent of. My father was so shock'd and afflicted at it, that it threw him into a fever which prov'd mortal. He was no sooner dead, but his loving widow turn'd her sister and me out of doors, and it was with great difficulty that I carried off my money and necessary apparel. In this distress, which was the greatest I ever knew, Du Fresne propos'd to me to go with her to Brussels, where she had an old Aunt whom she expected something from, and that would be willing to receive us. I gladly accepted her proposal, my spirit being too high to return to England in the condition I was reduced to. When we came to Brussels we found that her aunt was dead, but had left her the best part of what she had, which amounted to a reasonable subsistence. We agreed that I should
board

board with her under the name of Mademoiselle Dalincourt, and pretend I was a relation of her former brother-in-law's; she not caring to say any thing of the last alliance, which had been attended with such ill consequences to us both. Upon this foot I lived with her very quietly, till the Count d'Aguilar found me out, and by corrupting my mercenary friend, obtain'd more frequent access to me than I desired.

You remember the disorder I was in when he brought you first to see me : I knew you instantly; for my love had traced your image too strongly in my mind to be effaced by any length of time; whereas your indifference quickly made you lose all memory of me, and the alteration of almost fifteen years, had changed my person entirely from what it was when you saw me last.——I thought I should have died with the surprise, and was going, as soon as I could speak, to discover myself to you; but perceiving that you did not remember me, I check'd myself, and invented a pretence to cover my confusion. It struck me, that I might possibly make some advantage of the disguise in which you saw me; at least, I was sure of the satisfaction of conversing with you freely, and knowing what had happen'd to you since our parting. When you came to me again as the confidant of the Count d'Aguilar, it was no small revenge and pleasure to me, to see you ignorantly helping another man to debauch your own wife; and I could have found

in my heart to have let you succeed in your friendly mediation, as a punishment for the injuries you had done me: but my virtue soon rejected that temptation, and I thought of nothing but how to gain your esteem.

When you brought me the base proposal of Count Aguilar, it appear'd to me such a mark of your contempt, that I fully resolv'd not to see you any more. But when you express'd a repentance of that fault, and declar'd a respectful passion for me, even to the offering me marriage, I yielded to the dictates of my love, and admitted you to all freedoms but one alone. That I told you your future conduct might obtain; and I believe, said she blushing, you will hardly now have the same reluctance to accept it as you had formerly. But though I had thus engaged you by your promise, and still more by your inclination, my happiness was far from being fix'd. While the name of Emilia was conceal'd, I could not tell how the knowledge of it might affect you. It was still in your power to make me miserable, by being angry with my innocent deceit; but since you have been so good as to approve it, and acknowledge me for your wife, I shall make it my whole study and ambition, to deserve that title; and never think of my past misfortunes, but to enhance my present happiness.

Thus Emilia ended her narration, and receiv'd the compliments of Count Aguilar and his lady, who

who both express'd the highest joy at her good fortune.

Polydore, on his side, endeavoured to persuade the Countess to follow the example of Emilia, and be reconcil'd to her husband. She answer'd him coldly, that she had had too much experience of the temper of the Count, to trust to a sudden fit of fondness, which would wear itself out in a few months. That she was neither so young, nor so handsome now, as before their separation; how then could she flatter herself, that he would like her better when she was really less amiable? That what she had done for him might secure her his esteem, but she had receiv'd abundant proof that his esteem could but ill secure his love. I know, said she, the weakness of my heart: were I to live with him again, I should be jealous of him, even though he did not give me cause; and that would certainly make us both unhappy. It is better for me to leave him to his pleasures, and endeavour to secure my own tranquillity, by retiring from a world which I am unfit for.

Polydore finding it in vain to argue with her, and admiring the greatness of her mind, took his leave of the Count, and return'd to Brussels, where his marriage with Emilia was consummated almost twenty years after it was contracted.

LETTER XXXV.

SELIM to MIRZA at Ispahan.

From London.

I WENT yesterday with one of my acquaintance to see a friend of his, who has a house about twenty miles from London. He had formerly been a citizen and tradesman, but growing rich on a sudden by some lucky hit in the more profitable trade of stock-jobbing, he as suddenly set up for a judge in architecture, painting, and all the arts which men of quality would be thought to understand, and built this house as a specimen of his learning. When we came in, though it was in the midst of winter, we were carried into a room without a fire-place; and which look'd, if possible, still colder than it felt. I suppose, said I, this stone vault that we are in is design'd to be the burying-place of the family; but I should be glad to see the rooms in which they live, for the chilness of these walls is insupportable to a Persian constitution.

I see, said my companion, that you have no taste, or else you could not be cold in a saloon so beautiful as this.

Before I had time to make him any answer, the master of the house came in; but, instead of carrying us to a fire, as I hoped he would, he walk'd us about all his vast apartments, then
down

down into the offices under ground, and last into a garden, where a North-East wind, that blew very keen from off a heath to which it was laid open, finish'd what the saloon had begun, and gave me a cold, which took away my voice, in the very instant that I was going to complain of what he made me suffer. At length we ended our observations, and sat down to dinner, in a room where, by good fortune, the rules of architecture allow'd us to be warm: but when the meat was served, I was in great confusion not to know how to ask for any dish of all I saw before me; for it seems the gentleman eat in the French way, and nothing came up to his table in its natural form: my uneasiness was still greater, when, upon tasting of five or six different compositions, I found they were all mix'd with the flesh of * hogs, which I could not touch without pollution.

After losing my dinner in this manner, I was entertain'd all the evening with a conversation between the gentleman of the house and another man (who, they told me, was an architect) so stuffed with hard words and terms of art, that I could not understand one part in five of it. They talk'd much of certain men call'd Virtuosi, whom, by the near relation their title bore to virtue, I took at first to be a sect of rigid moralists: but, upon enquiry, I discover'd that they were a company of fidlers, eunuchs, painters, builders, gardeners, and above all, gentlemen that had travell'd

into

* Larded.

into Italy, who immediately came home perfect Virtuosi, though they went out the dullest fellows in the world. This order of men, which is pretty numerous (as I could collect from the discourse of these two adepts) assume a sort of legislative authority over the body of their countrymen: they bid one man pull down his house, and build another, which he can neither pay for, nor inhabit; they take a dislike to the furniture of a second, and command him to change it for a different one more expensive and less commodious; they order a third to go and languish at an opera, when he had rather be hallooing in a bear garden, it is even fear'd they will take upon them to decide what sort of woman every man shall be in love with, and prescribe a particular colour of eyes and hair for the only object of universal inclination.

I desir'd to be inform'd whether this jurisdiction had been ancient in this kingdom, having met with no traces of it in history?

No, said he, it is so modern, that all the laws of it are changed once in every seven years; and that which before was right itself, becomes at once a high crime and misdemeanour.

But, said I, does not the parliament confirm it, at least, for its own duration?

No, replied he, this authority is exercised independent of parliament; nay, it is even independent of the court, and the ministry must obey it as implicitly as the meanest of the people;
for

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for all great men are desirous to have a taste, and there is no other way of coming at one.

Upon the whole, it appears to me to be a kind of epidemical madness, and I am afraid to return to my own country, for fear I should carry it with me thither, as those who have been in Italy bring the infection along with them into England.

LETTER XXXVI.

SELIM to MIRZA at Ispahan.

From London,

THERE is a lady's house where I often pass my time, though I have very little intimacy with her; because it is really being in a publick place, and making a visit to half the town. The first time I went thither I congratulated her on the prodigious number of her friends, and told her, that she must certainly be possess'd of most extraordinary perfections, to attract such a variety of people, and please them all alike.—but I soon found, that in all that crowd of visitants there was hardly one who came thither on her account, but that their reason for coming was the same as her's for receiving them, because they had nothing else to do.

The last time I was there I met a gentleman, whose character I was still a stranger to, though I was very well acquainted with his face.

I want

I want to know (said I to a lady who sat next me) what is the merit of that gentleman over-against us, which recommends him so much to all the world? It seems to me that he does nothing, says nothing, means nothing, and is nothing; yet I always see him in good company.

His character, said she, may be comprehended in very few words——He is a good-natur'd man.

I am mighty glad to hear it, return'd I, for I want such a man very much: there is a friend of mine in great distress, and it lies in his power to do him service.

No, said she, he is of too indolent a temper, to give himself the trouble of serving any body.

Then what signifies his good-nature, answer'd I; or how do you know that he has any?

During this dialogue between us, the rest of the company had turn'd their discourse wholly upon scandal; and few reputations were spared by them, that were good enough to be thought worth attacking.

The good-natur'd man sat silently attentive, and with great humanity let them abuse his absent friends as much as they thought fit.

When that was over, he begun to entertain us with his sorrow for the death of a noble person, who, he said, had been his patron and benefactor: but, methought, he talk'd of it mightily at his ease; and the lady, who had given me his character, whisper'd me, that, notwithstanding
his

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his obligations and love to the deceased, he was now making court to his worst enemy, as obsequiously as he ever had to him.

At that instant there came in a certain colonel, who, as soon as he saw my gentleman, ran up to him, and embracing him very tenderly, my dear Jack, said he, thou shalt be drunk with me to-night.——

You know I have been ill, said the other gently, and drinking don't agree with me.

No matter for that, replied the colonel, you must positively be drunk before you sleep, for I can get no-body else to bear me company.

The good natur'd man could not resist such strong solicitations: he kindly agreed to the proposal, and all the room express'd their apprehensions, that his good-nature would be the death of him some time or other.

L E T T E R XXXVII.

SELIM to MIRZA at Ispahan.

From London.

IHAD, last night, so extraordinary a dream, and it made such an impression on my mind, that I cannot forbear writing thee an account of it.

I thought I was transported, on a sudden, to the palace of Ispahan. Our mighty Lord was sitting on a throne, the splendor of which my
eyes

eyes could hardly bear : at the foot of it were his emirs, and great officers, all prostrate on the ground in adoration, and expecting their fate from his commands. Around him stood a multitude of his guards, ready to execute any orders he should give, and striking terror into the hearts of all his subjects.—My soul was aw'd with the majesty of the scene, and I said to myself, Can a King of England compare himself to this? Can he, whose authority is confin'd within the narrow bounds of law, pretend to an equality with a monarch, whose power has no limits but his will?

I had scarce made this reflection, when, turning my eyes a second time towards the throne, instead of the Sophi, I saw an Eunuch seated there, who seem'd to govern more despotically than he. The Eunuch was soon changed into a Woman, who also took the Tiara and the sword; to her succeeded another, and then a third: but, before she was well established in her seat, the Captain of the Guards that stood around us march'd up to the throne, and seiz'd upon it: in that moment I look'd and beheld the Sophi lying strangled on the floor, with his Vizir, and three of his sultanas. Struck with horror at the spectacle, I left the palace, and going out into the city, saw it abandoned to the fury of the soldiers, who pillaged all its riches, and cut the throats of the defenceless inhabitants. From thence I made my escape into the country, which
was

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was a waste uncultivated desert, where I found nothing but idleness and want.

O, said I, how much happier is England, and how much greater are its Kings! their throne is establish'd upon justice, and therefore cannot be overturn'd. They are guarded by the affections of their people, and have no military violence to fear. They are the most to be honour'd of all princes, because their government is best fram'd to make their subjects rich, happy, and secure.—

L E T T E R XXXVIII.

SELIM to MIRZA at Ispahan.

From London.

I HAD some discourse to-day with an English gentleman, who has an affectation of being thought a great philosopher: his pretensions to it consist in nothing else, but refining away all the happiness of his life. By a great force of reasoning, he is arriv'd at a total disrelish of himself, and as complete an indifference to others. I am quite weary of living, said he to me; I have gone through every thing that bears the name of pleasure, and am absolutely disgusted with it all: I have no taste for women, wine, or play, because I have experienced the folly of pursuing them; and as for business, it appears to me to be more ridiculous than any of the three. The bustle of the town disturbs my quiet, and in the country

country I am dying of the spleen. I believe I shall go with you into Persia, only to change the scene a little; and when I am tired of being there, take a dose of opium, and remove to the other world.

I hope, Mirza, that thou and I shall never know what it is to be so wise; but make the best of those comforts and delights which nature has kindly bestow'd upon us, and endeavour to diffuse them as wide as possible, by the practice of those virtues from which they flow.—

LETTER XXXIX.

SELIM to MIRZA at Ispahan.

From London.

THERE is another gentleman of my acquaintance, who is a philosopher, but of a species very different from him I described to thee in my last.

He is possess'd of a considerable estate, which his friends are as much masters of as he: his children love him out of a principle of gratitude, by far more endearing than that of duty; and his servants consider him as a father, whom it would be unnatural for them not to obey.

His tenants are never hurt by drought or rain, because the goodness of their lord makes amends for the inclemency of the sky.

The

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The whole country looks gay about his dwelling, and you may trace all his footsteps by his bounties.

Is it not strange (I have often heard him say) that men should be so delicate as not to bear a disagreeable picture in their houses, and yet force every face they see about them to wear a gloom of uneasiness and discontent?

Is there any object so pleasing to the eye, as the sight of a man whom you have obliged, or any musick so agreeable to the ear, as the voice of one that owns you for his benefactor?

Such are the notions of this man concerning happiness; and it is probable they are not very wrong, for he himself is never out of humour, nor is it possible to be so in his company.

L E T T E R XL.

SELIM to MIRZA at Ispahan.

From London.

I WENT last night with my friend to see a lady, whose house is the favourite resort of the most agreeable people of both sexes. The lady herself receiv'd me with a good breeding, which I found was the result of good sense: she treated me as a stranger that came to see, not like a monster that came to be seen; and seem'd more desirous to appear in a good light herself to me, though a Persian, than to set me in a ridiculous
one

one to her company. The conversation turn'd upon various subjects, in all which she bore a considerable, but not a petulant or over-bearing part; and with modesty shew'd herself a mistress of most of the living languages, and not unacquainted with ancient and modern history.

The rest of the company had their due share of the conversation, which was carried on with spirit and good manners: one gentleman in particular distinguish'd himself, by the superiority of his wit, accompanied with so much delicacy and politeness, that none who heard him, felt themselves hurt by that pre-eminence, which he alone seem'd not to be conscious of.

His wit was all founded on good sense; it was wit which a Persian could comprehend as easily as an Englishman; whereas most that I have met with from other men, who are ambitious of being admired for that accomplishment, is confin'd not only to the taste of their own countrymen, but to that of their own peculiar set of friends. When this gentleman had entertain'd us for an hour or two, with the justest, as well as liveliest remarks both on persons and things that I ever heard, he went away; and, to comfort us for losing him, there came in the man of great good-nature, whom I described to thee in one of my former letters.

This courteous person hearing all of us very warm in praise of the other's wit, join'd in with us, but ended his panegyrick on it, with a plain,
though

though indirect insinuation, that there was a satirical turn in it, which render'd it very dangerous, and that the gentleman could not possibly be so witty, but at the expence of his good-nature.

I could not help being quite angry at so impertinent and ill-grounded a reflection, on a man for whom I had conceiv'd a great esteem, and desired to know why he supposed him to be ill-natured, only because he was not dull. Has he abused, said I, any worthy man? Has he defamed any woman of good character? If all the edge of his wit is turn'd on those who are justly the objects of ridicule, his wit is as great a benefit to private life, as the sword of the magistrate is to publick.

My gentleman fearing to be drawn into a dispute, which he could not carry on without exposing the secret envy of his heart, chang'd the discourse; and for the rest of his stay among us, which was not very long, kept a most strict silence, and gave no other indications of life, but that of laughing whenever any body laugh'd; and nods and gestures of approbation to whoever spoke.

The moment he was gone, I told my friend, that I did not much wonder to see that gentleman in mix'd company, where it was enough that he gave no offence; but that, in a select society as this was, he should be received only from a general notion of his good-nature, which was supported by no one action of his life, seem'd to me entirely

entirely unaccountable. For, even allowing his pretensions to that title, I was surpriz'd that such a character should be so scarce, as to make it so very valuable.

I can easily conceive, continued I, that the notorious reverse of that virtue would be a good reason to turn a man out of company; but I can't think, that the possession of that virtue, destitute of all others, is a reason for letting him into it.

If you'll keep my secret, replied my friend, I'll tell you the whole truth; but if you discover me, I shall pass for ill-natur'd myself. You must know then, that there are about this town, ten thousand such fellows as this, who, without a grain of sense or merit, make their way by reciprocally complimenting one another. Their numbers make them formidable, especially supported, as they are, by the fair sex. They sneak into good company, like dogs after some man of sense, whom they seem to belong to; where they neither bark nor bite, but cringe and fawn; so, that neither good manners nor humanity will allow one to kick 'em out, till at last they acquire a sort of right by sufferance. They preserve their character, by having no will of their own, which in reality is owing to their having no choice: they are all possessed of some degree of cunning, and their passions are too low and dull to break in upon't, or hurry them into the indiscretions of men of parts. Besides, they know that

that they are in a constant state of probation, where the least transgression damns them: they carry no compensation about them, for active faults won't be borne, where there are at best but negative virtues. The small number of people of sense are forced to submit in this, as in many other silly customs, to a tyrannical majority, and lavish undeservedly the valuable character of good-nature, to avoid being as unjustly branded with that of ill-nature themselves.

Might not another reason be given for it, answer'd I? Are not vanity and self-love the great causes of not only the toleration, but the privileges these people enjoy? And don't security from censure, certainty of applause, or the discovery of an eminent superiority, prevail with those of the best parts to really like, what they only pretend to suffer, the conversation of those of the worst?

Very possibly, reply'd my friend; at least the vanity of the wisest is certainly the comfort of the weakest, and seems to be given as an allay to superior understandings, like cares to superior stations, to preserve a certain degree of equality, that providence intended among mankind.

LETTER XLI.

SELIM to MIRZA at Ispahan.

I HAD yesterday the pleasure of a spectacle, than which nothing is more striking to a foreigner, because he can have a right idea of it nowhere else; I saw the three estates of the kingdom assembled in parliament. The King was on his throne in all his majesty; around him sat the peers in their different robes; at the bar stood the Speaker of the Commons, attended by the House. Several laws were offer'd to the King to receive his assent; and the person who brought them up to him, made obeysances, almost as low as those which are used in Persia, when we approach the sublime throne of our mighty Emperor. I took notice of the humility of these prostrations to a gentleman that came with me: the reason of them is this, answered he, that here the King appears in his highest character, and the honours that are paid him are to his office; but where his person only is considered, such extraordinary submissions are not practised. Then he made me observe, that when the Commons sent up the subsidies granted to the King, he thanked them for 'em, as an acknowledgment, that he had no power to raise them on the people without their free consent: antiently, added he, supplies of money, and redress of grievances went together; but such

is the present happiness of our condition, that we have more money than ever to bestow, and no grievances at all to be redressed.

Pray, said I to him, who are those upon yonder bench, whose habit is so different from the rest, and that look as if they belonged to another place? Those, said he, are the Bishops, who sit here not as Bishops, but as Barons.

I suppose then, return'd I, that while these reverend persons do their duty here as Barons, they take care to appoint others in the country, to do their duty there as Bishops.

He was going to answer me, when the House rose, and put an end to my enquiries.

LETTER XLII.

SELIM to MIRZA at Ispahan.

From London.

THIS morning I received a visit from the gentleman under whose conduct I had been at the House of Lords. After some general discourse upon that subject, he asked me what I thought of their nobility.

I am too great a stranger, answered I, to have formed a right opinion of what they are; but if you please, I will tell you freely what I think they should be.

An English nobleman should be a strenuous assertor of the privileges of the people, because he is

perpetually intrusted with the care of them ; and at the same time desirous to preserve the just rights of the crown, because it is the source from which his honour is derived.

He should have an estate that might set him above dependance, and employ the superfluities, if such there were, not in improving luxury, but extending charity.

He should make his Dignity easy to his inferiors, by the modesty and simplicity of his behaviour ; nor ever think himself too great for the lowest offices of friendship and humanity.

He should claim no privilege that might exempt him from the strictest rules of justice ; and afford his protection not to men obnoxious to the law, but to every modest virtue and useful art.

The character you have drawn, replied my friend, though it be rare, yet is not imaginary : some there are to whom still it may belong ; and it eminently exists in a young nobleman, grandson and heir to a late illustrious commander, whose name even in Persia is not unknown.

LETTER XLIII.

SELIM to MIRZA at Ispahan.

From London.

ABOUT a fortnight ago I went in company with one of my acquaintance, to see a place in this city called the Exchange, which is the general

neral rendezvous of all the merchants, not only of England, but the whole trading world. I never yet came into an assembly with so much respect as into this. These, said I, to my friend, are the most useful, and therefore the most honourable of mankind. They are met here to carry on the common happiness; their gains are the advantage of the publick; and their labour makes the ease of human life.

By the character you give me of this circle, replied my friend, you don't seem to think yourself in a court, though there are so many * Kings round about you.

I see, said I, the images of Kings, but I see neither dependance nor adulation. Besides, every body here has some real business, which alone were sufficient to distinguish them from the crowd that fills a drawing-room.

I had scarce spoke these words, when he carried me out into a neighbouring alley, where I also saw some busy faces, but which look'd methought very different from the others. These, said he, are a sort of traders, whose whole business is confin'd within the compass of this alley, where they create a kind of ebb and flow, which they know how to turn to good account; but which is destructive to all trade, except their own. Nay, they have sometimes raised such violent tempests here, that half the wealth of the nation has been sunk by it.

* The Royal-Exchange is set round with the statues of the Kings of England.

They are then a sort of magicians, answered I.

A most diabolical one truly, replied he; and what is most wonderful, the masters of the art have the secret to render themselves invisible: though they are always virtually present here, they never appear to vulgar eyes: but some of their imps are frequently discovered, and by their motions, the skilful in this traffick steer their course, and regulate their ventures.

While he was saying this to me, there came up to us an ill-look'd fellow, and ask'd if we had any stock to sell.

He whisper'd me in the ear, that this was an imp. ——— I started; called on Mahomet to protect me, and made the best of my way out of the alley.

LETTER XLIV.

SELIM to MIRZA at Ispahan.

From London.

THAT Abdallah, whom I mention'd in a former letter, is gone from England; thou wilt be affected with the virtue of the man, when I tell thee the cause of his departure. He sent last week to desire I would come to him; I came, and found him oppress'd with the deepest sorrow. Ah, Selim, said he to me, I must leave thee; I must go, and discharge my duty to the best of fathers;

fathers; I must give my all for him, to whom I owe it. At these words, he put a letter into my hand, which he had just receiv'd the day before: I found by it, that his father, who was a merchant, in a voyage from Grand Cairo to Aleppo, was taken by a cruizer of the isle of Malta, and being unable himself to pay his ransom, had writ to his son to do it for him. Thou knowest, said he to me, that I am not rich: To raise the sum demanded for my father's liberty, I must sell all my effects, and leave myself without the means of a subsistence, except what my labour can procure me. But my own distress is not what concerns me most: The fear of poverty cannot fright me from my duty; I only grieve for the fate of my poor wife, whom the ruin of my fortune will expose to indigence and shame. 'Tis for her sake that I have sent for you; and I conjure you by all our friendship, by the Prophet and the God whom we adore, not to refuse me the first favour I ever ask'd.— When he had said this, he open'd the door of another room, where I saw a beautiful woman in the Turkish habit, who with a modesty peculiar to our Eastern ladies, endeavour'd to conceal herself from my regards. Come hither Zelis, said my friend, and see the man whom I have chosen to protect you: See him who must shortly be your husband in the room of the unfortunate Abdallah. Then turning to me, and weeping bitterly, This, cry'd he, O Selim, is the grace for which I am a suppliant: Permit me to give

her to a man, who I know will use her well; I am resolv'd to divorce her this very instant, according to the power allow'd me by our law, if you will consent to take her for your wife. If the charms of her person are not sufficient to recommend her to you, know that her mind is still fairer and more accomplish'd. I brought her with me into England three years ago, in all which time, she has hardly stirr'd out of my house, nor desir'd any company but mine. It is impossible to be happier with a wife, than I have been with her: Nothing shou'd ever have prevail'd on me to part with her, but the desire to separate her from my misfortunes, and to procure her a maintenance agreeable to her birth and merit, which I am no longer able to provide for her myself.

HE had scarce ended, when the lady tearing her hair, and beating the whitest breast I ever saw, implored him not to think of a separation, more painful to her than any misery that poverty cou'd reduce her to.

After many passionate expressions of her love, she declared, that she wou'd accompany him to Malta, and beg her bread with him afterwards, if it was necessary, rather than stay behind in the most affluent condition. But he positively refused to let her go, and insisted upon giving her to me, as the only expedient to make him easy. I continued some time a silent witness of this extraordinary dispute; but at last seeing him determin'd to divorce her, I told him, I wou'd accept her as

a treasure committed to my hands, not for my own use, but to secure it for my friend: That she shou'd remain with me under the character of my wife, but I wou'd always be a stranger to her bed; and if at his return he found himself in circumstances sufficient to maintain her, I wou'd restore her back again to him untouch'd; or in case they shou'd mutually desire it, carry her with me to my Seraglio in the East. They were both much comforted with this assurance, and Zelis consented to stay with me, since Abdallah commanded it. The poor man embark'd for Malta the following week, with his whole fortune on board for his father's ransom, and left me so touch'd at his filial piety, that I made an offer to pay part of it myself; but he told me I had done enough for him in taking care of what was dearest to him upon earth, and refus'd any further succour from me.

N. B. This Story is resumed, Letter 80.

L E T T E R XLV.

SELIM to MIRZA at Ispahan.

From London.

I LATELY fell into discourse with an Englishman, who has well examin'd the constitution of his country: I begg'd him to tell me what he thought of the present state of it. Two principal

evils, answer'd he, are making way for arbitrary power, if the court shou'd ever be inclin'd to take advantage of them, viz. corruption and eloquence: The last is, if possible, more mischievous than the first; for it seduces those whom money cou'd not tempt. It is the most pernicious of all our refinements, and the most to be dreaded in a free country. To speak truth is the privilege of a freeman; to do it roundly and plainly, is his glory: Thus it was, that the ancient Romans debated every thing that concern'd the common-wealth, at a time when they best knew how to govern, before Greece had infected them with rhetorick: As nothing was propounded to them with disguise, they easily judg'd what was most for their honour and interest. But the thing call'd eloquence is of another kind: It is less the talent of enforcing truth, than of imposing falsehood; it does not depend on a true knowledge of the matter in debate, for generally it aims at nothing more than a specious appearance; nor is wisdom a necessary quality in the composition of an orator; he can do without it very well, provided he has the happy facility of discoursing smoothly, and asserting boldly. I own to thee, Mirza, this account surpriz'd me; we have no knowledge in the East of such an eloquence as this man describ'd: It is our custom to speak naturally and pertinently, without ever imagining that there was an art in it, or that it was possible to talk finely upon a subject which we do not understand.

Pray

Pray sir, said I, when these orators you tell me of have been caught two or three times in a lie, don't you treat them with the utmost contempt? Quite the contrary, answer'd he, the whole merit and pride of their profession is to deceive: They are to lay false colours upon every thing, and the greater the imposition is, the greater their reputation: The orator who can only persuade us to act against some of our lesser interests, is but a genius of the second rate; but he who can compel us by his eloquence to violate the most essential, is an able man indeed, and will certainly rise very high. I suppose, it may be your custom in Persia to bestow employments on such persons as have particularly qualified themselves for them; you put the care of the army and the marine into the hands of foldiers and seamen; you make one man secretary of state, because he has been bred in foreign courts, and understands the interests of your neighbouring princes; to another you trust the revenue, because he is skilful in oeconomy, and has prov'd himself above the temptation of embezzelling what passes through his hands. Yes, replied I, this is surely the right method, and I conclude it must be yours. No, said he, we are above those vulgar prejudices; such qualifications are not requisite among us; to be fit for all or any of these posts, one must be a good speaker in parliament. How! said I, because I make a fine harangue upon a treaty of peace, am I therefore fit to superintend an army? We think

think so, answer'd he: And if I can plausibly defend a minister of state from a reasonable charge brought against him, have I thereby a title to be taken into the administration? Beyond dispute, in this country, answer'd he. Why then, by Mahomet, said I, your government may well be sick: What a distemper'd body must that be, whose members are so monstrously out of joint, that there is no one part in its proper place! If my tongue shou'd undertake to do the office of my head and arms, the absurdity and the impotency wou'd be just the same.

Yet thus, said he, we go on lamely enough, I must confess, but still admiring our own wise policy, and laughing at the rest of the world.

You may laugh, replied I, as you think fit: But if the Sultan, my master, had among his counsellors such an orator as you describe, a fellow that wou'd prate away truth, equity, and common sense; by the tomb of our holy prophet, he wou'd make a Mute of him, and set him to watch over the Seraglio, instead of the State.

At these words, I was obliged to take my leave, and our discourse was broke off till another meeting.

L E T T E R XLVI.

S E L I M to M I R Z A.

THE next day I saw my friend again, and he resum'd the subject of eloquence. You cannot imagine, said he to me, of what fatal consequence this art of haranguing has been to all free states: Good laws have been establish'd by wise men, who were far from being eloquent; and eloquent men, who were far from being wise, have every-where destroy'd or corrupted them. Look into history, you will find, that the same period which carried eloquence to its perfection, was almost always mortal to liberty. The republicks of Greece, and that of Rome, did not see their most celebrated orators, till the very moment that their constitutions were overturn'd. And how indeed shou'd it be otherwise? When once it becomes a fashion to advance men to dignity and power, not for the good councils that they give, but for an agreeable manner of recommending bad ones; it is impossible that a government so administer'd can long subsist. Is any thing complain'd of as amiss? Instead of redress, they give you an oration: Have you propos'd a good and needful law? In exchange for that you receive an oration. Has your natural reason determin'd you upon any point? Up gets an orator, and so confounds you, that you are no longer able to reason
at

at all: Is any right measure to be obstructed, or wrong one to be advanc'd? There is an orator always ready, and it is most charmingly performed to the delight of all the hearers.

I don't know, said I, what pleasure you may find in being deceiv'd; but I dare say, shou'd these gentlemen undertake to instruct a merchant in his business, or a farmer in his work, without understanding either trade or husbandry, they wou'd only be laugh'd at for their pains; and yet when they attempt to persuade a nation to commit a thousand senseless faults, they are listen'd to with great attention, and come off with abundance of applause. But for my part, I think they deserve nothing but hatred and contempt, for daring to play with such sacred things as truth and justice, in so wanton and dissolute a manner.

Most certainly, answer'd he, they are very dangerous to all society; for what is it that they profess? Don't they make it their boast, that they have the power to sooth or to inflame; that is, in proper terms, to make us partial, or to make us mad? Are either of these tempers of the mind agreeable to the duty of a Judge? I maintain, that it wou'd be just as proper for us to decide a question of right or wrong, after a debauch of wine, or a dose of opium, as after being heated or cool'd, to the degree we often are, by the address of one of these skilful speakers.

Wisely was it done by the Venetians, to banish a member of their Senate (as I have read they did)
only

only because they thought he had too much eloquence, and gain'd too great an ascendant in their councils by that bewitching talent. Without such a caution there is no safety; for we are led, when we fancy that we lead; and the man that can master our affections, will have but little trouble with our reason.——But, to shew you the power of oratory, in its strongest light, let us see what it does with Religion: In itself it is simple and beneficent, full of charity and humility; and yet, let an eloquent preacher get up into a pulpit, what monstrous systems will he draw out of it! What pride, what tyranny will he make it authorize! How much rancour and malignity will he graft upon it! If then the laws of God may be thus corrupted by the taint of eloquence, do we wonder that the laws of men cannot escape? No, said I, no mischiefs are to be wonder'd at, where the reason of mankind is so abus'd.

L E T T E R XLVII.

S E L I M to M I R Z A.

THE conversation I repeated to thee in my last, was heard by a gentleman that sat near us, who, I have been told, has found his account so much in eloquence, as to be interested in the defence of it: Accordingly, he attack'd my friend, and told him, he was afraid he had forgot his history, or he wou'd have recollected, that
Demost-

Demosthenes and Cicero, the two greatest orators that ever were, employ'd their rhetorick in the service of their country. I might, perhaps, answer'd he, make some objections to the integrity of both; but, allowing what you say, it amounts to no more than this, that eloquence may be of service to mankind in the possession of very good men; and so may arbitrary power, of the greatest service; but yet we say in England, that it is wiser not to trust to it; because, as it is generally managed, it becomes a most grievous oppression. And, I am sure, I can shew you in history as many orators that have abus'd their eloquence, as kings that have abus'd their authority: For, besides the wickedness common to human nature, the vanity of making a bad cause appear a good one, is in itself a dangerous temptation: When a man sees he is able to impose upon the judgments of others, he must be a very honest, and very modest one indeed, if he never does it wrongfully. Alas, Sir, return'd his antagonist, the generality of men are too weak to bear truth! They must be cheated into happiness.——I am sure they are often cheated out of it, replied my friend: Nor can I wholly agree to your proposition in the sense you understand it: It may be necessary for the government of mankind, not to tell them the whole truth; something may be proper to be hid behind the veil of policy; but it is seldom necessary to tell them lies.

These

These pious frauds are the inventions of very impious men; they are the tricks of those, who make the publick good a pretence for serving their private vices. Let us consider how mankind was govern'd in those ages and states, where they are known to have been the happiest. How was it in Athens, while the laws of Solon preserv'd their force? Was it then thought necessary to lie for the good of the commonwealth? No,——the People were truly inform'd of every thing that concern'd them, and as they judg'd by their natural understanding, their determinations were right, and their actions glorious: But when the orators had got the dominion over them, and they were deceiv'd upon the principle you establish, what was the consequence? Their leaders became factious and corrupt, and they who had given liberty to the rest of Greece, most shamefully yielded up their own. In Rome the case was much the same: As long as they were a great and free people, they understood not these political refinements. All governments in their first institution were founded in truth and justice, and the first rulers of them were generally honest men; but, by length of time, corruption is introduced, and men come to look upon those frauds as necessary to government, which their forefathers abhorr'd as destructive to it. It does not, said I, belong to me, to decide in this dispute; but it seems to be highly important, that this power of deceiving for the publick good shou'd be lodg'd in safe hands.

And

And I suppose that such among you as are trusted with it, are very constant and uniform in their principles; they never vary from themselves: What with them is the declared and essential interest of the nation now, will certainly be so next year: Disgrace or favour can make no difference.

LETTER XLVIII.

SELIM to MIRZA at Ispahan.

From London.

I WAS the other day in company with a clergyman, who has the education of several young noblemen committed to his care: A trust of this importance made me regard him as one of the most considerable men in England. This sage (said I to myself) has much to answer for: The virtue and happiness of the next age will in a great measure depend on his capacity.—I was very desirous to enter into discourse with him, that I might know if he was equal to his office, and try'd all the common topicks of conversation; but on none of these was I able to draw a word from him: At last, upon some point being started, which gave him occasion to quote a Latin Poet, he open'd all at once, and pour'd forth such a deluge of hard words, compos'd out of all the learned languages, that though I understood but
little

little of his meaning, I could not help admiring his elocution.

As his scholars were many of them born to an hereditary share in the legislature, I concluded he must be thoroughly acquainted with the English constitution, and able to instruct them in the knowledge of it: But, upon asking him some questions on that subject, I found, to my very great surprize, that he was more a stranger to it than my self, and had no notions of government, but what he drew from the imaginary republick of a Greek Philosopher. Well, said I, you at least instruct your scholars in Grecian and Roman virtue; you light up in them a spirit of liberty; you exercise them in justice and magnanimity; you form them to a resemblance of the great characters they meet with in ancient authors. Far from it, said a gentleman in company.—They are accusom'd to tremble at a rod, to tell lies in excuse of trifling faults, to betray their companions, to be spies and cowards: The natural vigour of their spirits is restrain'd, the natural ingenuity of their tempers varnish'd over, the natural bent of their genius curb'd and thwarted: The whole purpose of their education is to acquire some Greek and Latin words; by this only they are allow'd to try their parts; if they are backward in this, they are pronounc'd dunces, and often made so from discouragement and despair.

I shou'd

I shou'd think, said I, if words only are to be taught them, they shou'd learn to speak English with grace and elegance, which is particularly necessary in a government where eloquence has obtain'd so great a sway. That article is never thought of, answer'd he: I came myself from the college a perfect master of one or two dead languages, but cou'd neither write nor speak my own, till it was taught me by the letters and conversation of a lady about the court, whom, luckily for my education, I fell in love with.

I have heard, said I, that it is usual for young gentlemen to finish their studies in other countries; and indeed it seems necessary enough by the account you have given me of them here: But, if I may judge by the greatest part of those whom I have seen at their return, the foreign masters are no better than the English, and the foreign mistresses not so good. Were I to go back to Persia with an English coat, an English footman, and an English cough, it wou'd amount to just the improvement made in France, by one half of the youth who travel thither. Add to these, a taste for musick, replied the gentleman, with two or three terms of building and painting, and you wou'd want but one taste more to be as accomplish'd, as the finest gentleman that Italy sends us back.

L E T.

L E T T E R XLIX.

SELIM to MIRZA.

FROM considering the education of English gentlemen, we turn'd our discourse to that of English ladies. I ask'd a married man that was in company, to instruct me a little in the course of it, being particularly curious to know the methods which cou'd render a woman in this country so different a creature from one in Persia. Indeed sir, said he, you must ask my wife, not me that question: These are mysteries I am not allowed to pry into: When I presume to give my advice about it, she tells me the education of a lady is above the capacity of a man, let him be ever so wise in his own affairs. I shou'd think, said I, that as the purpose of womens breeding is nothing else, but to teach them to please men; a man shou'd be a better judge of that than any woman in the world. But, pray sir, what in general have you observ'd of this mysterious institution? I don't enquire into the secrets behind the altar, but only the outward forms of discipline which are expos'd to the eyes of all the world. Why sir, replied he, the first great point which every mother aims at, is to make her a Girl Goddess if she can.

A Goddess! cry'd I, in great astonishment.—

Yes, said he, you have none of them in the East; but here we have five or six in every street:
There

There never were more divinities in Egypt, than there are at this time in the town of London. In order therefore to fit them for that character, they are made to throw off human nature, as much as possible, in their looks, gestures, words, actions, dress, &c. — But is it not apt to return again? said I. — Yes, replied he, it returns indeed again, but strangely distorted and deform'd. The same thing happens to their minds as to their shapes; both are cramped by a violent confinement, which makes them swell out in the wrong place. You can't conceive the wild tricks that women play from this habitual perversion of their faculties: There is not a single quality belonging to them, which they do not apply to other purposes than providence design'd it for: Hence it is, that they are vain of being cowards, and ashamed of being modest: Hence they smile on the man whom they dislike, and look cold on him they love; hence they kill every sentiment of their own, and not only act with the fashion, but really think with it. All this is taught them carefully from their childhood, or else it would be impossible so to conquer their natural dispositions.

I don't know, said I, what the use is of these instructions; but it seems to me that in a country, where the women are admitted to a familiar and constant share in every active scene of life, particular care shou'd be taken in their education, to cultivate their reason, and form their hearts, that they may be equal to the part they have to act. Where
great

great temptations must occur, great virtues are requir'd; and the giddy situations they are plac'd in, or love to place themselves, demand a more than ordinary strength of brain. In Persia a woman has no occasion for any thing but beauty, because of the confinement in which she lives, and therefore that only is attended to; but here, methinks, good sense is so very necessary, that it is the business of a lady to improve and adorn her understanding with as much application as the other sex, and, generally speaking, by methods much the same.

LETTER L.

SELIM to MIRZA at Ispahan.

From London.

I WAS this morning with some gentlemen of my acquaintance, who were talking of the attempt that had been made not long ago of setting up a press at Constantinople, and the opposition it had met with from the Mufti. They applied to me to know what I thought of it, and whether in Persia also, it was our religion that depriv'd us of so useful an art.

I told them, that policy had more part than religion in that affair: That the press was a very dangerous engine, and the abuses of it made us justly apprehend ill consequences from it.

You

You are in the right, said one of the company, for this single reason, because your government is a despotick one. But, in a free country the press may be very useful, as long as it is under no correction; for it is of great consequence, that the people should be inform'd of every thing that concerns them; and without printing, such knowledge could not circulate, either so easily or so fast. And to argue against any branch of liberty from the ill use that may be made of it, is to argue against liberty itself, since all is capable of being abus'd. Nor can any part of freedom be more important, or better worth contending for, than that by which the spirit of it is preserved, supported, and diffus'd. By this appeal to the judgment of the people, we lay some restraint upon those ministers, who may have found means to secure themselves from any other less incorruptible tribunal; and sure, they have no reason to complain, if the publick exercises a right, which cannot be denied without avowing, that their conduct will not bear enquiry. For though the best administration may be attack'd by calumny, I can hardly believe it would be hurt by it, because I have known a great deal of it employ'd to very little purpose, against gentlemen, in opposition to ministers, who had nothing to defend them but the force of truth.

The gentleman who spoke thus, was contradicted by another of the company, who, with great warmth, and many arguments, maintain'd,

That

‘ That if the press was put under the inspection
 ‘ of some discreet and judicious person, it wou’d
 ‘ be far more beneficial to the publick.

I agree to it, answer’d he, upon one condition,
 viz. That there may be likewise an inspector for
 the people, as well as one for the court; but if
 nothing is to be licens’d on one side, and every
 thing on the other, it wou’d be vastly better for
 us to adopt the Eastern policy, and allow no print-
 ing here at all; than to leave it under so partial
 a direction.

L E T T E R L I.

SELIM to MIRZA at Ispahan.

From London.

THE same gentleman, who, as I told thee
 in my last, argu’d so strongly for the liber-
 ty of the press, went on with his discourse in the
 following manner.

If we have so much reason to be unwilling,
 that what we print shou’d be under the inspection
 of the court; how much more may we complain
 of a new power assumed within these last fifty
 years by all the courts in Europe, of inspecting
 private letters, and invading the liberty of the
 post? The secrecy and safety of correspondence,
 is a point of such consequence to mankind, that
 the least interruption of it wou’d be criminal, with-
 out an evident necessity; but that of course, from

G

one

year to another, there shou'd be a constant breach of it publickly avow'd, is such a violation of the rights of society, as one cannot but wonder at even in this age.

You may well wonder, said I to him, when I myself am quite amaz'd to hear of such a thing; the like of which, was never practis'd amongst us, whom you English reproach with being slaves. But I beg you to inform me what it was, that cou'd induce a free people to give up all the secrets of their business and private thoughts, to the curiosity and discretion of a minister, or his inferior tools in office?

They never gave them up, answer'd he; but those gentlemen have exercis'd this power by their own authority, under pretence of discovering plots against the state.—No doubt, said one of the company, it is a great advantage and ease to the government, to be acquainted at all times with the sentiments of considerable persons, because it is possible they may have some ill intent.—It is very true, replied the other, and it might be still a greater ease and advantage to the government to have a licens'd spy in every house, who shou'd report the most private conversations, and let the minister thoroughly into the secrets of every family in the kingdom. This wou'd effectually detect and prevent conspiracies; but wou'd any body come in to it on that account?

PERSIAN in ENGLAND. 147

Is it not making a bad compliment to a government, to suppose, that it cou'd not be secured without such measures, as are inconsistent with the end for which it is design'd?

But such in general is the wretched turn of modern policy: the most sacred ties are spurn'd at, to promote some present interest, without considering how fatal it may prove in its remoter consequences, and how greatly we may want those useful barriers we have so lightly broken down.

L E T T E R LII.

SELIM to MIRZA at Ispahan.

From London.

THOUGH the English are a very warlike people, yet military virtues and abilities are neither so much consider'd or encourag'd by them, as many others of vastly less importance:~ They seem to forget, that on these alone must depend the security of the rest, and that every civil excellence is useless, unless it be under their protection. So careless is the nation in this point, that a general who has served with reputation to himself and to his country, shall have less power allow'd him in the government than a voluble speaker in parliament, or

ing pleader at the bar. Nay, even in his own province, at the head of an army, he shall be curb'd and thwarted by twenty people, who are got into military employments, by the peaceful merit of unbounded complaisance, and who, by virtue of their posts in a war office, take upon them to direct his operations, and criticise his conduct. Hence it has often been seen that in the camp, where an absolute authority is most necessary, there was neither obedience nor subordination; while in another place, where they never shou'd be suppos'd, they were most regularly establish'd and maintain'd. There was, indeed, a great general in a late reign, who kept himself superior to all these gentlemen, during the course of a twelve years war; and therefore made it a very glorious one; but it was not his merit nor his success, that set him above their censures; it was wholly owing to a fortunate relation he happen'd to have with the first minister.

And this very general was afterwards disgraced in the midst of all his glory, by the cabals of a man of no great parts, and a woman, who had just wit enough to influence another that had none.

Very different was the conduct of the French king, in regard to those who fought his battles in that war: Far from disgracing them in their triumphs, he rewarded them even in their defeats; thinking the zeal with which they served him

him was a merit, which, tho' it cou'd not procure them the smiles of fortune, very justly entitled them to his.

Such a policy as this, at the long run, must infallibly make a prince victorious: For who wou'd not die to serve so good a master? And how formidable is an army, that is animated by sentiments of affection as well as glory!

But, I don't know how it comes to pass, that the English nation, which has often made a great figure in the field, and generally a very poor one in the cabinet, is so lavish of favour and rewards to unsuccessful negotiators, and so sparing of them to its most fortunate commanders.

L E T T E R LIII.

SELIM to MIRZA.

I AM return'd to this city, from which I have made a long excursion, and am going to give thee an account how I have pass'd my time. A friend of mine, who lives in a part of England, distant from the capital, invited me to spend the summer at his house: My curiosity to see something new, and a natural love to fields and groves at this season of the year, made me glad to accept of his proposal.

The first thing that struck me in leaving London, was to find all the country cultivated like one great garden. This is the genuine effect of that happy liberty which the English enjoy: Where property is secure, industry will exert itself; and such is the force of industry, that without any particular advantages of soil or climate, the lands about this city are of a hundred times greater profit to their owners, than the best temper'd and most fertile spots of Asia to the subjects of the Sophi, or the Turk.

Another circumstance which engaged my attention throughout all my journey, was the vast number of fine seats that adorn'd the way as I travell'd along, and seem'd to express a certain rural greatness extremely becoming a free people. It look'd to me, as if men who were possess'd of such magnificent retreats, were above depending on a court, and had wisely fix'd the scene of their pride and pleasure in the center of their own estates, where they cou'd really make themselves most considerable. And indeed, this notion is true in fact; for it has always been the policy of princes that wanted to be absolute, to draw gentlemen away from their country seats, and place them about a court, as well to deprive them of the popularity which hospitality might acquire, as to render them cold to the interest
of

of the country, and wholly devoted to themselves. Thus we have often been told by our friend Ulbec, that the court and capital of France is crowded with nobility; while in the provinces, there is scarce a mansion-house that is not falling to ruin; an infallible sign of the decay and downfal of the nobility itself. Those who remember what England was forty years ago, speak with much uneasiness of the change they observe in this particular; and complain, that their countrymen are making haste to copy the French, by abandoning their family seats, and living too constantly in town; but this is not yet sensible to a foreigner. Thou may'st expect the sequel of my journey in other letters.

L E T T E R L I V .

S E L I M to M I R Z A .

IT happen'd when I fet out from London, that the parliament, which had sat seven years, was just dissolv'd, and elections for a new one were carrying on all over England. My first day's stage had nothing in it remarkable, more than what I observ'd to thee in my last. But when I came to the town where I was to lodge, I found the streets all crowded with men and women, who gave me a lively idea

of what I have read of the ancient Bacchanals. Instead of Ivy, they carried oaken boughs, were exceeding drunk and mutinous; but at the same time mighty zealous for religion. My Persian habit drew them all about me, and I found they were much puzzled what to make of me. Some said I was a German minister, sent by the court to corrupt the Electors; upon which suggestion, I had like to have been torn to pieces; others fancied me a Jesuit; but at last they agreed I was a Mountebank, and as such conducted me to my Inn with great respect. When I was safely deliver'd from this danger, I took a resolution - to lay aside my foreign dress, that I might travel with less disturbance; and fell in to discourse upon what had pass'd with a gentleman that accompanied me in my journey. It seem'd to me very strange, that in an affair of so great importance as the choice of a guardian for their liberties, men shou'd drink themselves out of their reason. I ask'd, whether riots of this kind were common at these times? He answer'd, that the whole business of the candidates was to pervert and confound the understandings of those that chuse them, by all imaginable ways: That from the day they begun to make their interest, there was nothing but idleness and debauchery among the common people: The care of their families

families is neglected; trades and manufactures are at a stand; and such a habit of disorder is brought upon them, that it requires the best part of seven years to settle them again. And yet, continued he, this evil, great as it is, may be reckon'd one of the least attending these affairs. Cou'd we bring our electors to content themselves with being drunk for a year together, we might hope to preserve our constitution; but it is the sober, considerate corruption; the cool bargaining for a sale of their liberties, that will be the certain undoing of this nation, whenever a wicked minister shall be the purchaser.

LETTER LV.

SELM to MIRZA.

THE next day brought us into a county town, where the elections for the city and the shire were carrying on together. It was with some difficulty that we made our way through two or three mobs of different parties, that oblig'd us by turns to declare ourselves for their respective factions. Some of them wore in their hats tobacco leaves, and seem'd principally concern'd for the honour of that noble plant, which they said had been attack'd by the ministry; and in this I heartily join'd with them,

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being

being myself a great admirer of its virtues, like most of my countrymen. When we came to our inn, I entertain'd myself with asking my fellow-traveller questions about elections. The thing was so new to me, that in many points I cou'd not believe him. As for instance, when he told me that in former times the counties and boroughs us'd to pay the members they sent to parliament for the expence of their journey and attendance; but that now those wages were withdrawn, and on the contrary, the candidates paid the electors; it seem'd to me incomprehensible, that an age so mercenary in other cases, shou'd be grown so disinterested in this. ——— It look'd also very odd, that a corporation shou'd take such a sudden liking to a man's face, whom they never saw before, as to prefer him to a family that had served them time out of mind; yet this, I was assured, very often happen'd, and what was stranger still, on the recommendation of another person, who was no better known to them himself. My instructor added, that there was in England one man, so extremely popular, though he never affected popularity, that a line from him, accompany'd with two or three bits of a particular sort of paper, was enough to direct half the nation in the choice of their representatives.

It wou'd be endless to repeat to thee, all the tricks which he told me other gentlemen were forced

forced to use to get themselves elected. One way of being well with a corporation, is to kiss all their wives. My companion confess'd to me, that he himself had formerly been obliged to go thro' this laborious solicitation, and had met with some old women in his way, who made him pay dearly for their interest. But these methods (said he) and other arts of popularity, are growing out of fashion every day. We now court our electors, as we do our mistresses, by sending a notary to them with a proposal : If they like the settlement, it is no matter how they like the man that makes it ; but if we disagree about that, other pretensions are of very little use. And to make the comparison the juster, the members thus chosen have no more regard to their venal constituents, than husbands so married to their wives. I ask'd, if they had no laws against corruption. Yes, said he, very strong ones, but corruption is stronger than the Laws. If the magistrates in Persia were to sell wine, it would signify very little that your law forbids the drinking it. Upon the whole, he gave me to understand, that some of their parliaments had not been much better representatives of the nation, than some of their Kings of God Almighty, whom they arrogantly pretended to represent,

LETTER LVI.

SELIM to MIRZA.

ON the third day our travels were at an end, and I arriv'd at my friend's house with all the pleasure which we received from retirement and repose, after a life of tumult and fatigue. I was as weary of elections, as if I had been a candidate myself, and cou'd not help expressing my surprize, that the general disorder on these occasions, had not brought some fatal mischief on the nation.—That we are not undone by it, replied my friend, is entirely owing to the happy circumstance of our being an island. Were we seated on the continent, every election of a new parliament wou'd infallibly draw on an invasion.—It is not only from enemies abroad that you are in danger, answer'd I: One wou'd think that the violence of domestick feuds shou'd of itself overturn your constitution, as it has so many others; and how you have been able to escape so long, is the wonder of all who have been bred up under absolute monarchies: For they are taught, that the superior advantage of their form of government consists in the strength of union; and that in other states, where power is more divided, a pernicious confusion

fusion must ensue—They argue rightly enough, said the gentleman who came along with me, but they carry the argument too far. No doubt, factions are the natural inconveniencies of all free governments, as oppression is too apt to attend on arbitrary power. But the difference lies here, that in an absolute monarchy, a tyrant has nothing to restrain him; whereas parties are not only a controul on those that govern, but on each other; nay, they are even a controul upon themselves, as the leaders of them dare not give a loose to their own particular passions and designs, for fear of hurting their credit with those whom it is their interest to manage, and to please. Besides, that it is easier to infect a prince with a spirit of tyranny, than a nation with a spirit of faction; and where the discontent is not general, the mischief will be light. To engage a whole people in a revolt, the highest provocations must be given; in such a case, the disorder is not chargeable on those that defend their liberties, but on the aggressor that invades them. Parties in society, are like tempests in the natural world; they cause, indeed, a very great disturbance, and when violent, tear up every thing that opposes them; but then they purge away many noxious qualities, and prevent a stagnation which would be fatal: All nations that live in a quiet slavery, may be properly said to stagnate;

stagnate; and happy wou'd it be for them, if they were rous'd and put in motion by that spirit of faction they dread so much; for, let the consequences of resistance be what they wou'd, they can produce nothing worse than a confirm'd and establish'd servitude: But generally such a ferment in a nation throws off what is most oppressive to it, and settles by degrees, into a better and more eligible state. Of this we have receiv'd abundant proof; for there is hardly a privilege belonging to us, which has not been gain'd by popular discontent, and preserv'd by frequent opposition. I may add, that we have known many instances, where parties, tho' ever so inflam'd against each other, have united, from a sense of common danger, and join'd in securing their common happiness. This I think, ought to free us from the reproach of sacrificing our country to our divisions, and make those despair of success, that hope by dividing to destroy us.

L E T T E R LVII.

S E L I M to M I R Z A.

FOR the first month of my being in the country, we did nothing from morning till night, but dispute about the government. The natural beauties round about us were little
attended

attended to, so much were we taken up with our enquiries into political defects. My two companions disagreed in many points; though I am persuaded they both meant the same thing, and were almost equally good subjects, and good citizens. I sometimes fancy'd, that I had learnt a great deal in these debates; but when I came to put my learning together, I found myself not much wiser than before. The master of the house was inclin'd to the side of the court, not from any interested or ambitious views, but, as he said, from a principle of whiggism: This word is one of those distinctions, which for little less than a century have divided and perplexed this nation. The opposite party are called tories. They have as strong an antipathy to each other, as the followers of Osman to those of Hali. I desired my friend to give me some certain mark by which I might know one from the other. The whigs, said he, are they, that are now in place, and the tories are they that are out. I understand you, return'd I, the difference is only there; so that if they who are now tories, were employ'd, they wou'd instantly become whigs; and if the whigs were remov'd, they wou'd be tories. Not so, answer'd he, with some warmth: There is a great difference in their principles and their conduct. Ay, said I, let me hear that, and then I shall be able to chuse my party. The tories, said he, are for advancing the power of the crown,
and

and raising the pride and riches of the clergy. They garbled our army, lost our honour, and were assistant to the greatness of France.

You surprise me! replied I; for I have heard all this imputed to some, who, you assure me, are good whigs; nay, the very pillars of whiggism.

I'll explain that matter to you immediately, said the gentleman that came down with me: whiggism is an indelible character, like episcopacy: For as he who has once been a bishop, though he no longer performs any of the offices and duties of his function, is a bishop nevertheless; so he who has once been a whig, let him act never so contrary to his principles, is nevertheless a whig; and as all true church-men are obliged in conscience to acknowledge the first, so all true whigs are in duty bound to support the last.

Very well, said I; but are there none who differ from this orthodox belief? Yes, said he, certain obstinate people; but like other dissenters, they are punish'd for their separation, by being excluded from all places of trust and profit.

A heavy punishment indeed, answer'd I! But I have observ'd, that all sects are apt to strengthen and encrease by persecution.

L E T T E R LVIII.

SELIM to MIRZA at Ispahan.

From London.

I WENT with my country friend some days ago, to make a visit in a neighbouring county, to the prelate of that diocese. His character is so extraordinary, that not to give it to thee, would be departing from the rule I have laid down, to let nothing that is singular escape my notice. In the first place, he resides constantly on his diocese, and has done so for many years: He asks nothing of the court for himself or family: He hoards up no wealth for his relations, but lays out the revenues of his see in a decent hospitality, and a charity devoid of ostentation. At his first entrance into the world, he distinguish'd himself by a zeal for the liberty of his country, and had a considerable share in bringing on the revolution that preserv'd it. His principles never alter'd by his preferment: He never prostituted his pen, nor debased his character by party disputes or blind compliance. As he is at too great a distance from the scene of action, to judge himself of what is doing, he has not thought fit to put his conscience in the keeping of another. Though he is serious in the belief of his religion, he is moderate to all who differ from him: He knows no distinction of party, but extends his good offices
alike

alike to whig and tory; a friend to virtue under any denomination; an enemy to vice under any colours. His health and old age, are the effects of a temperate life and a quiet conscience: Though he has now some years above fourscore, no body ever thought he liv'd too long, unless it was out of an impatience to succeed him.

This excellent person entertain'd me with the greatest humanity, and seem'd to take a peculiar delight in being useful and instructive to a stranger. To tell thee the truth, Mirza, I was affected with the piety and virtue of this teacher*; the christian religion appear'd to me so amiable in his character and manners, that if the force of education had not rooted Mahometism in my heart, he would certainly have made a convert of me.

L E T T E R LIX.

SELIM to MIRZA

MY long stay in the country, gave me leisure to read a good deal; I applied myself to history, particularly that of England; for rightly to understand what a nation is, one shou'd previously learn what it has been. If I complain'd of the different accounts which are given by the English of themselves in their present circumstances, I have no less reason to complain of their historians:

* The Translator supposes, that the Author means Dr. Hough, the present Bishop of Worcester.

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historians: Past transactions are so variously related, and with such a mixture of prejudice on both sides, that it is as hard to know truth from their relations, as religion from the comments of divines. The great article in which they differ most, is the ancient power of the crown, and that of the parliament: According to some, the latter is no more than an incroachment on the former; but according to others, it is as old as the monarchy itself.

This point is debated with great warmth, and a multitude of proofs alledged by either party: Yet in truth, it is of very little consequence to the present interests of the state. If liberty were but a year old, the English wou'd have just as good a right to claim and to preserve it, as if it had been handed down to them from many ages: For allowing that their ancestors were slaves, through weakness or want of spirit; is slavery so valuable an inheritance that it never must be parted with? Is a long prescription necessary to give force to the natural rights of mankind? If the privileges of the people of England be concessions from the crown, is not the power of the crown itself a concession from the people? Thou seest therefore, that all this mighty controversy is rather matter of speculation, than of use: However, I have endeavour'd to clear it up for my own satisfaction, and design to give thee my notions on that subject, in some letters where I consider it more at large. I will finish this, by
making

making one remark on the uncertainty of history, viz. that those accounts which are writ by men concern'd in the transactions they relate, though their authority be generally most allow'd, are perhaps still more unlikely to be true, than those that are drawn from antient records, and common fame; because vanity and self-love are more dispos'd to disguise the truth, than the publick to make wrong judgments, or a diligent collector to alter facts.

LETTER LX.

SELIM to MIRZA.

IT is a usual piece of vanity in the writers of every nation, to represent the original constitutions of their respective states, as founded on deep laid systems and plans of policy, in which they imagine that they discover the utmost reach of human wisdom; whereas, in truth, they are often the effects of downright chance, and produc'd by the force of certain circumstances, or the simple dictates of nature itself, out of a regard to some present expediency, and with little providence to the future.

Such was the original of the celebrated Gothick government, that was formerly spread all over Europe, and though much defac'd by time, is still distinguishable here. Notwithstanding the admiration, which those who treat of it, affect
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to express of its wise contrivance, it is plain, that it was casually establish'd; that it was produc'd not in a cabinet, but a camp; and owes much less to the prudence of a legislator, than to the necessity of the times which gave it birth.

The people that introduc'd it into Britain, and every where else, were a multitude of soldiers, unacquainted with any thing but war: Their leader, for the better carrying it on, was invested with a sort of regal power, and when it happen'd that the war continu'd long, he acquir'd a prescriptive authority over those who had been accusom'd to obey his orders; but this authority was directed by the advice of the other officers, and dependant on the good-liking of the army, from which alone it was deriv'd: In like manner, the first revenues of this leader, were nothing more than a title to a larger share in the common booty, or the voluntary contributions of the soldiers out of the wealth acquir'd under his command. But had he attempted to take a horse or cow, or any part of the plunder from the meanest soldier, without his free consent, a mutiny wou'd certainly have ensu'd, and the violation of property been reveng'd. From these principles, we may naturally draw the whole form of the Saxon or Gothick government. When these invaders were peaceably settled in their new possessions, the general was chang'd into a King, the officers into nobles, the council of war into a council of state, and the body of the soldiery itself into a
general

general assembly of all the freemen. A principal share of the conquests, as it had been of the spoils, was freely allotted to the prince, and the rest by him distributed according to rank and merit among his troops and followers, under certain conditions agreeable to the Saxon customs. Hence the different tenures, and the services founded upon them; hence the vassallage, or rather servitude of the conquer'd, who were oblig'd to till the lands which they had lost, for the conquerors who had gain'd them, or at best, to hold them of those new proprietors on such hard and slavish terms, as they thought fit to impose. Hence likewise, the riches of the clergy, and their early authority in the State: For those people being ignorant and superstitious in the same degree, and heated with the zeal of a new conversion, thought they cou'd not do too much for their teachers, but with a considerable share of the conquer'd lands, admitted them to a large participation of dominion itself.—Thus, without any settled design, or speculative skill, this constitution in a manner form'd itself; and perhaps it was the better for that reason, as there was more of nature in it, and little of political mystery, which wherever it prevails, is the bane of publick good. A government so establish'd, cou'd admit of no pretence of a superior nature in the person of a King, or an unalterable right in the succession. It cou'd never come into the heads of such a people, that they were to submit to
a bad

a bad administration for conscience sake; or, that their liberties were not every way as sacred as the prerogative of their prince. They cou'd never be brought to understand, that there was such a thing as reason of state distinct from the common reason of mankind; much less wou'd they allow pernicious measures to pass unquestion'd, or unpunish'd, under the ridiculous sanction of that name.

L E T T E R LXI.

S E L I M to M I R Z A.

I GAVE thee in my last a short account of the first rise and construction of the Saxon government, on very plain and simple foundations. It was a mix'd state, and consequently limited, but the limitations were not well ascertain'd: The different powers that compos'd it, were mutually checks upon each other; but to what degree those restraints were to be exercis'd, did not always sufficiently appear. The Nobles found the King too imperious, and the King the Nobles too incroaching; the Commons had rights and privileges, but with little ability to make them good, unless when particular conjunctures supply'd them with an extraordinary force. The Clergy aw'd alike both King and Nobles, at once protecting the Commons, and oppressing them:
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They protected them for their own interest against the Crown upon certain occasions; but oppressed them with infinite exactions, and a denial of all justice against themselves. In this state the government continued for a considerable length of time, till the wisdom of two or three great Kings corrected many of its errors, and brought the whole machine into better order; but the violent invasion of the Danes, and much more that of the Normans, like a foreign weight roughly laid upon the springs, disturb'd and obstructed its proper motions: Yet by degrees it recover'd itself again; and how ill soever the Saxon people might be treated, under the notion of a conquest, the Saxon constitution was unsubdued. The new comers relish'd slavery no better than the old inhabitants, and gladly join'd with them upon a sense of mutual interest, to force a confirmation of their freedom and the ancient laws. Indeed, there was so great a conformity between the government of Normandy and that of England, the customs of both nations were so much the same, that unless the Normans by conquering this island had lost their original rights, and fought on purpose to degrade themselves and their posterity, it was impossible their Kings cou'd have a right to absolute power. When therefore they attempted to assume it, they were vigorously oppos'd. Civil wars ensu'd, which ended to the disadvantage of the Crown; but the misfortune was,

was, that in all these struggles, the Nobles treated for the people, not the people for themselves; and therefore their interests were much neglected, and the advantages gain'd by the Nobles grew as heavy a burthen to them as the very powers they had taken from the King. It then became the interest of the King to raise the people in opposition to the nobility; and they felt the effects of this jealousy, far more to their advantage than they had done the friendship of the nobles; for in process of time, they grew a match for them and the Crown itself; by which happy alteration in their circumstances, the whole frame of the government was chang'd, and a new balance of power introduc'd, better pois'd than it ever was before. Yet many principal causes that brought about this great revolution were purely accidental, and the consequences of them unforeseen by those who laid them; so great a share has fortune in the events which are generally attributed to policy.

L E T T E R LXII.

SELIM to MIRZA.

THOU wilt be surpriz'd to hear that the period when the English nation enjoy'd the greatest happiness was under the influence of a woman. As much as we Persians should despise
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a female ruler; it was not till the reign of Queen Elizabeth, that this government came to an equal balance, which is the true perfection of it.

To shew what this happy situation was, it will be necessary to give thee some idea of what Parliaments had been till her time.

The assembly of the people under the Saxons, was more properly a Diet than a Parliament. All the freemen had a right to be present there; but how far they had a vote in it, is uncertain. It is probable, that in most affairs they were determin'd by the advice and authority of the principal or leading men.

After the invasion of the Normans, these assemblies seldom met, and by degrees, wholly lost their former shape: The Commons were no longer present in them; and when afterwards they came thither by deputation, (not promiscuously, as before) the people were no great gainers by it; for the whole strength of the government resided in the Barons and the Clergy, who did what they pleas'd in all affairs. The proceedings of the Commons cou'd not be free in their representative body, while they were feeble and oppress'd in their collective. The laws of vassallage, and the immunities of the church hung heavy upon them, and hinder'd them from acting with any vigour. Without the Nobles or Clergy on their side, they durst refuse nothing to the Crown, and so strong was their dependancy upon them, that we find in most of the civil wars, they blindly follow'd the passions

passions of both, and made or unmade Kings as they directed. But in return for their services they got their liberties confirm'd, and many of their grievances redrest; they reveng'd themselves on the ministers that oppress'd them, and obtain'd good laws for the Commonwealth. Nor indeed, did any Parliament, freely chosen, ever consent to establish slavery by law, but their rights continued always unretracted, though weakly maintain'd.

Such was the condition of the House of Commons for many centuries, and that it was able to support itself at all under so many disadvantages, shews a great natural strength in its constitution. That strength was exerted by degrees; its privileges were considerably enlarg'd, and it became in fact, as well as name, a third part of the Legislature. The laws of vassallage were broken through; the estates of the Nobles were made alienable; the weight of property was transferr'd to the side of the people. Many accidents concurr'd to the same effect. A reformation in religion was begun, by which that mighty fabrick of church power, erected on the ruins of publick liberty, and adorn'd with the spoils of the Crown itself, was happily attack'd and overturn'd. The immense possessions of the clergy were taken away, and most of them bestow'd upon the Commons. They had now the greatest share of the lands of England, and a still greater treasure in their commerce, which they were beginning to extend and improve. Their riches secured their

independancy ; the clergy fear'd them, and the Nobles cou'd not hurt them. In this state Queen Elizabeth found the Parliament: The Lords and Commons were nigh upon a level, and the Church in a decent subordination. She had skill enough to give to each its proper weight, and yet keep her own authority entire: She was the head of this well-proportion'd body, and supremely directed all its motions. Thus, what in mix'd forms of government seldom happens, there was no contest for power in the Legislature ; because no part was so high as to be uncontroul'd, or so low as to be oppress'd. The great end of government was attain'd in the satisfaction of the people, and every other happiness follow'd that, as every misfortune and disgrace is sure to attend on their discontent.

LETTER LXIII.

SELIM to MIRZA.

I ENDED my last letter with the felicity of Elizabeth's reign: Very different was that of her successor James the first: for his character and conduct were the reverse of hers. He endeavour'd to break the balance of the government by her so wisely fixt; and begun a struggle for power with his people, without one quality that cou'd render him capable of going through with it to his advantage: He had neither courage, ability,

lity, nor address: He was contemn'd both at home and abroad; his very favourites did not love him, though he sacrificed every thing to them: Yet by the single force of luxury, he so weaken'd the spirit of the nation, that he made great advances towards effecting the point he aim'd at, viz. rendering himself absolute: And that he did not compleat it, was rather owing to the indigence to which he had reduc'd himself, and want of personal resolution, than any difficulties he met with. The clergy, whom he corrupted among the rest, were very assistant to him, by preaching up notions which they seem to have borrow'd from our religion, of a right divine in kings, and other such Mahometan tenets, that had never been heard of in this country. And they were reciprocally assisted by the King in the introduction of certain ceremonies, of little use but to encrease their own authority. But there were many who disliked these innovations, and their opposition hinder'd them from spreading quite so far as the court desired. These obstinate Protestants and Patriots were branded with the name of Puritans, and much hated by James, and Charles his son, who upon the decease of the former, succeeded to his kingdoms and designs. He had many better qualities than his father, but as wrong a judgment, and greater obstinacy. He carried his affection for the clergy, and abhorrence of the Puritans, to an excess of bigotry and rage. He agreed so ill with his Parliaments, that he soon grew weary

of them, and resolv'd to be troubled with no more: None were call'd for several years together, and all that time he govern'd as despotically as the Sophi of Persia. The laws were either openly infringing'd, or explain'd in the manner he directed: He levied money upon his subjects against privileges expressly confirm'd by himself. In short, his passion for power might have been fully gratified, if his more prevailing one to bigotry had not engag'd him in a senseless undertaking, of forcing the same form of worship upon his subjects in Scotland, as he had declar'd himself so warmly for in England. It is safer to attack men in their civil rights, than their religious opinions: The Scots, who had acquiesced under tyranny, took up arms against persecution. Their insurrection made it necessary to call a Parliament; it met, but was instantly dissolv'd by the intemperate folly of the Court. All hopes of better measures were put an end to, by this last provocation. The Scots marched into England, and were receiv'd by the English, not as enemies, but as brothers and allies: The King, unable to oppose them, was compell'd to ask the aid of another Parliament. A Parliament met, inflam'd with the oppression of fifteen years: The principal members of it were men whom the necessity and danger of the times had render'd equally able and determin'd: They resolv'd to make use of the opportunity to redress their grievances, and secure their liberty; the King granted every thing that
was

was necessary to either of those ends; but what perhaps was really concession, had the appearance of constraint, and therefore gain'd neither gratitude nor confidence: The nation cou'd no longer trust the King, or if it might, particular men cou'd not, and the support of those particular men was become a national concern: They had expos'd themselves by serving the publick; the publick therefore judg'd that it was bound in justice to defend them. Nor indeed was it possible, when the work of reformation was begun, to keep people who were fore with the remembrance of injuries receiv'd, within the bounds of a proper moderation. Such a sobriety is much easier in speculation than it ever was in practise. Thus partly for the safety of their leaders, and partly from a jealousy of his intentions, the Parliament drew the sword against the King: But the sword when drawn, was no longer theirs; it was quickly turn'd against them by those to whose hands they trust-ed it: The honestest and wisest of both parties were out-witted and over-power'd by villains: The King perish'd, and the constitution perish'd with him.

A private man, whose genius was call'd forth by the troubles of his country, and form'd in the exercise of faction, usurp'd the government. His character was as extraordinary as his fortune: He was enthusiast enough to be agreeable to the humour of the times; and yet sensible enough to govern his enthusiasm by the rules of prudence.

He trampled on the laws of the nation, but he rais'd the glory of it; and it is hard to say which he deserv'd most, a halter or a crown.

At his death, (which was a natural one in his height of power) all order was lost in the state: Various tyrannies were set up, and destroy'd each other; but all shew'd a republick to be impracticable. At last, the nation growing weary of such wild confusion, agreed to recall the banish'd son of their murder'd King, and restor'd him without any limitations, even such as had been legally obtain'd before the troubles. Thus the fruits of a tedious civil war were lightly and wantonly thrown away, by too hasty a passion for repose. The constitution reviv'd indeed again, but reviv'd as sickly as before: The ill humours which ought to have been purg'd away by the violent remedies that had been us'd, continu'd as prevalent as ever, and naturally broke out in the same distempers. The King wanted to set himself above the law; wicked men encourag'd this disposition, and many good men were weak enough to comply with it, out of aversion to those principles of resistance which they had seen so fatally abus'd.

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L E T T E R LXIV.

SELIM to MIRZA.

THE methods pursued by Charles the second, in the conduct of his government, were in many respects different from his father's, though the purpose of both was much the same. The father always bully'd his Parliaments; the son endeavour'd to corrupt them: The father obstinately refus'd to change his ministers, because he really esteem'd them as honest men: The son very easily chang'd his, because he thought they were all alike dishonest, and that his designs might as well be carried on by one knave as by another: The father was a tool of the clergy, and a persecutor, out of zeal for his religion; the son was quite indifferent to religion, but serv'd the passions of his clergy against their enemies from motives of policy: The father desir'd to be absolute at home, but to make the nation respectable abroad; the son assisted the King of France in his invasions on the liberties of Europe, that by his help he might master those of England: Nay, he was even a pensioner to France, and by so vile a prostitution of his dignity, set an example to the Nobility of his realm, to sell their honour likewise for a pension; an example, the ill effects of which, have been felt too sensibly ever since.

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Thus,

Thus, a conduct the most infamous to the Prince, was also the most dangerous to the people, and oppression was so much the more heavy, as it was not gilded with any outward lustre.

Yet with all these vices and imperfections in the character of Charles the second, there was something so bewitching in his behaviour, that the charms of it prevail'd on many to connive at the faults of his government: And indeed, nothing is so hurtful to a country, which has liberties to defend, as a Prince who knows how at the same time to make himself despotick and agreeable: This was eminently the talent of Charles the second, and what is most surprising, he possess'd it without any great depth of understanding.

But the principal instrument of his bad intentions, was a general depravity of manners, with which he took pains to infect his court, and they the nation. All virtues, both publick and private, were openly ridicul'd; and none were allow'd to have any talents for wit or business, who pretended to any sense of honour, or regard to decency.

The King made great use of these new notions, and they prov'd very pernicious to the freedom, as well as morals of his subjects: But an indolence natural to his temper, was some check to his designs; and fond as he was of arbitrary power, he did not pursue it any further, than was consistent with his pleasure and repose.

In

In the following reign, the evil still encreas'd, as it had been justly apprehended. —

The spirit of bigotry was added to the spirit of tyranny, and an enterprising temper to a weak understanding: A change of religion was attempted as well as of government, which rous'd those whom no danger to the latter cou'd ever have alarm'd, and taught the preachers of non-resistance to resist. A revolution was evidently necessary to save the whole, and that necessity produc'd one. —

King James the second lost his Crown, and the nation gave it to their deliverer the Prince of Orange: The government was settled on a new foundation, agreeable to the antient Saxon principles from which it had declin'd; and by a happiness peculiar to itself, grew stronger from the shocks it had sustain'd.

L E T T E R LXV.

SELIM to MIRZA.

THE first advantage gain'd by the English nation in the change of their government, was the utter extinction of those vain and empty phantoms of hereditary inalienable right, and a power not subject to controul, which King James the first had conjur'd up, to the great disturbance and terror of his people. With James the second they were expell'd, nor can they ever be brought back

back again with any prospect of success, but by that Family alone, which claims from him: For which reason it will eternally be the interest of the people of England not to suffer such a claim to prevail; but to maintain an establishment which is founded on the basis of their liberty, and inseparably connected with it.

As the parliament plainly dispos'd of the crown in altering the succession, the princes who have reign'd since that time, cou'd pretend to none but a parliamentary title, and the same force as the legislature cou'd give to that, it also gave to the privileges of the subject.

The word Loyalty, which had long been misapplied, recover'd its original and proper sense; it was now understood to mean no more than a due obedience to the authority of the King, in conformity to the laws, instead of a bigoted compliance to the will of the King, in opposition to the laws.

How great an advantage this must be, will appear by reflecting on the mischiefs that have been brought upon this country in particular, from the wrong interpretation of certain names. But this is not the only benefit that ensu'd from that happy revolution. The prerogative of the crown had been till then so ill defin'd, that the full extent of it was rather stop'd by the degree of prudence in the government, or of impatience in the people, than by the letter of the law: Nay, it seem'd as if in many instances the law allow'd a
power

power to the King, entirely destructive to itself. Thus princes have been often made to believe, that what their subjects complain'd of as oppression, was a legal exercise of their right; and no wonder, if in disputable points, they decided the question in favour of their own authority.

But now the bounds of prerogative were mark'd out by express restrictions; the course of it became regular and fix'd, and cou'd no longer move obliquely to the danger of the general system.

Thou wilt therefore observe this difference between the government in the reign of queen Elizabeth, and the state of it since the revolution; that Elizabeth chose to rule by parliaments, from the goodness of her understanding; but princes now are forc'd to do so from necessity; because all expedients of governing without them are manifestly impracticable. I will explain this to thee more distinctly when I write again. In the mean while, let me a little recal thy thoughts from past events, and the history of England, to the remembrance and love of thy faithful Selim, who is not become so much an Englishman as to forget his native Persia, but perpetually sighs for his friends and country amidst all that engages his attention in a foreign land.

L E T.

LETTER LXVI.

SELIM to MIRZA.

THE antient revenues of the Kings of England, consisted chiefly in a large demesne of lands, and certain rights and powers reserv'd to them over the lands held of the crown; by means of which they supported the royal dignity without the immediate assistance of the people, except upon extraordinary occasions. But in process of time, the extravagance of princes, and the rapaciousness of favourites having wasted the best part of this estate, and their successors endeavouring to repair it by a tyrannical abuse of those rights and powers, some of them, which were found to be most grievous, were bought off by the parliament, with a fix'd establishment for the maintenance of the household, compos'd of certain taxes yearly rais'd, and appropriated thereto.

But after the expulsion of the Stuarts, the expence of the government being augmented for the defence of the succession, the crown was constrain'd to apply to parliament, not only for the maintenance of its household, which was settled at the beginning of every reign, and in every reign considerably encreas'd; not only for extraordinary supplies, to which end parliaments anciently were call'd: But for the ordinary service of the year.

Thus

Thus a continual dependance on the people became necessary to Kings, and they were so truly the servants of the publick, that they receiv'd the wages of it in form, and were oblig'd to the parliament for the means of exercising their royalty, as well as for the right they had to claim it. Nor can this salutary dependance ever cease, except the parliament itself shou'd give it up, by empowering the King to raise money without limiting the sum, or specifying the services. Such concessions are absurd in their own nature; for if a prince is afraid to trust his people with a power of supplying his necessities upon a thorough knowledge of them, the people have no encouragement to trust their prince, or to speak more properly, his minister, with so blind and undetermin'd an authority.

L E T T E R LXVII.

S E L I M to M I R Z A.

IN providing for the maintenance of their Kings, the people of England have been bounteous, even beyond what cou'd justly be expected; and this shews with what security a Prince may rely upon his parliament: But they do not seem to be sufficiently aware how great an addition of real wealth accrues to the Crown from the disposal of all offices and employments, most of which it not only may bestow, but resume again at pleasure.

Is not this very properly a vast estate in the possession of the King, since no Prince can eat and drink his whole revenue, but must lay it out in gratifications to his favourites, his ministers, and his servants. Anciently the great officers of the state, were all of them for life, and many of them chosen by the people; those only of the household were immediately dependant on the King, and as he paid them out of his own immediate income, it was his interest to have as few as was consistent with his dignity and service. But now, that all the officers of the commonwealth, both civil and military, are nominated by the King, and paid by him with the money of the publick; now that so few hold their places by their good behaviour, or any lasting tenure whatsoever, it is plainly the interest of the crown to multiply offices without end, because the court is the richer for all the money that is lavished to maintain them, tho' the publick be impoverished and undone. In other countries, the profit of a tax is diminished by the charge of collecting it, but here the court does in effect gain as much upon the produce of a subsidy, by that part of it which goes to the collectors, as by that which comes into the exchequer.

How can one hope that a Prince should be desirous of reducing the national expence, by lessening the number of employments, when every new salary that he gives, is a new fund of wealth

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at his disposal, and the infallible purchase of a new dependant?

L E T T E R LXVIII.

SELIM to MIRZA.

YOU have seen in my last, that from the time of King James's deposition, annual meetings of parliament were become necessary to the carrying on the government. But for fear the representatives of the people should grow by frequent commerce, and long habit too intimately acquainted with courts and ministers, it was thought expedient not long after, to pass a law for the chusing a new parliament, once in every three years; which term has been since prolong'd to seven, perhaps upon very good foundations; but further than this, it would be most imprudent for the nation to trust its deputies, tho' they were much less liable than they have sometimes been, to forget what they owe to their constituents.

Among other advantages gain'd to liberty at this its happy restoration, a free exercise of their religion was allowed to those who differ from the rites of the English Church, which has been continued and secured to them ever since, with some short interruptions, that even the party which caused them, is now ashamed of. Nor has any thing contributed more than this, to the peace and happiness of the government, by gaining it
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the affection of all its subjects, a point of more importance to society, than any speculative opinions whatsoever.

The act which settled the succession of these realms on the family now reigning, is the last and greatest bulwark of the British freedom: It is a covenant between the people and their sovereign, so much the more binding and irrefragable, as it is founded on a true sense of their mutual interests, and admits of no pretence on either side, of having been forcibly impos'd, or unwarily accepted.

This succession was facilitated and secured by the union of Scotland with England; and Great-Britain became infinitely stronger, by being undivided and entire.

One condition of this union, was the admitting sixteen-Scotch peers, chosen by the whole body of the peerage, into the English house of Lords, but upon a tenure very different from the rest, being to sit there only for the duration of the parliament, at the end of which, a new election must be made. If those elections are uninfluenced and free, this alteration in the English constitution, may prove very much to its advantage, because such a number of independant votes will balance any part of the house of Peers, over which, in any future parliament the court may have obtain'd too great an influence; but if they should ever be chosen by corruption, and have no hopes of sitting there again, except by an unconstitutional dependence on the favour of a court, then such a number
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ber added to the others, will grievously endanger the constitution, and the house of Lords, instead of being, as it ought, a mediating power between the Crown and the people, will become a sort of anti-chamber to the court, a meer office for executing and authorising the purposes of a minister.

I have now, my dear Mirza, traced thee out a general plan of the English constitution, and I believe thou wilt agree with me upon the whole, that a better can hardly be contrived, the only misfortune is, that so good a one can hardly be preserved.

Philosophers no doubt, may imagine very perfect schemes of policy, but then they should be administered by philosophers, for if they are left to common men, that ideal perfection is soon destroy'd. We have seen how the iniquity of the Mollas has corrupted that most holy form of worship, which came down with the Alcoran from Heaven; and if a form of government also were sent down, I make no doubt but it would be turn'd into a tyranny in the course of a few centuries, except the same wisdom that established it, would also take care of its execution.

L E T.

LETTER LXIX.

SELIM to MIRZA.

IN former reigns, when parliaments were laid aside, for any length of time, the whole authority of the state was lodged in the privy council, by the advice and direction of which, all affairs were carried on. But these counsellors being chosen by the King, and depending on his favour, were too apt to advise such things only, as they knew would be most agreeable; and thus the interests of the nation were often sacrificed to the profit and expectations of a few particulars. Yet still, as on extraordinary occasions, the King might be forced to call a parliament, the fear of it was some check to their proceedings; and a degree of caution was natural to men who foresaw they should sooner or later be called to an account. But let us suppose, that any future prince could wholly influence the election of a parliament, and make the members of it dependant on himself, what would be the difference between that parliament and a privy council? Would it speak the sense of the nation, or of the court? Would the interest of the people be consider'd in it, or that of their representatives? They would only differ in this respect, that one, being accountable to no body, might be absolutely free from
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all restraint, which with the terror of a parliament hanging over them, the other never cou'd.

This is the only imaginable method, by which the liberty of the English nation can be attack'd hereafter; and tho' certainly this might bring it into danger, yet the peril is greater to the man who shall make the attempt: For there is a formidable spirit in the people, that may be lull'd, but not easily laid asleep; and corruption itself may break, when swell'd too far.

But thou wilt ask, to what end should a court do this? Why should a King of England go about to destroy a constitution, the maintenance of which would render him both great and happy?

I reply, that a King indeed can have no inducement to make such an experiment, but a minister may find it necessary for his own support; and happy would it have been for many countries, if the master's interest had been consider'd by the servant, half so warmly as the servant's by the master.

If a man who travels thro' Italy, was to ask, what advantage all the riches in religious houses, are to the saints they are dedicated to, it would be impossible to satisfy his demand: But the priests, who are really gainers by them, know that they pillage the people to good purpose; and make use of a venerable name, not for any regard they have to it, but to cover and secure their own extortion.

L E T.

LETTER LXX.

SELIM to MIRZA at Ispahan.

From London.

I CAME up from the country, with the gentleman in whose company I went down, and as we were now become very well acquainted, the pleasure I found in his conversation, made me less sensible of the badness of the roads, which else I should have murmured at extremely, and consider'd as a proof of the disregard to publick utility, which seems to be growing the characteristick of the English——At the end of our journey, I observed to him, with a good deal of surprize, in how naked and defenceless a condition the whole island appear'd to lie: Not a town that had a wall or ditch about it; not a castle that had a single cannon mounted; the very ports and magazines of naval stores so little fortified, as to be liable to an insult.——I don't believe, said I, that there is a horde of Indian savages so incapable of defence as all this country, were an enemy got within it. None can get within it, answer'd he.——The sea which furrounds us is our wall, and the most impregnable of any. If that wall (return'd I) cannot be forc'd, at least it may be surpriz'd: The extent of it is too great to be so guarded, as that no part of it shall be open some time

time or other. When I consider the uncertainty of your protection, I am astonish'd at the fulness of your confidence. You do by your country as by your women; you expose it to the attacks of each invader, and rely for its defence on the wind and sea, a security no more to be depended on, than the inclinations of a lady.—We have experience of its safety, answer'd he; five or six such attempts have been made upon us, and not one of them succeeded.—I still hold to my comparison, replied I, of your country to your women: Both may have escap'd nineteen attacks, and yet be carried at the twentieth; especially if we should suppose any concurrence of passions from within, to invite the ravisher, or weaken the resistance. But, said he, we have an army to defend us in case of an invasion; an army maintain'd in time of peace, and the best aguerried of any troops in Europe that have never seen an enemy.

True, said I; but I heard you the other day declare very warmly for reducing them.—I did so, answered he, and do so still, from a jealousy of the use that may be made of them. They are design'd to oppose a foreign enemy, but they may be employ'd to civil purposes as well as military; they may be submitted to the discipline of a minister as well as of a general; the very rewards and punishments which are necessary for keeping them in order, may be under a ministerial direction: In short, they may be so twisted,
turn'd

turn'd, and chang'd, as to become the troops of the minister, not of the state.

If an army, said I, be necessary for your defence, you shou'd take care that no body may have power to employ it for your destruction: If that security cannot be obtain'd, you must endeavour to defend yourselves without it, or at least, with as small a part of it as is possible, because the nearest danger is the greatest: But give me leave to say, that were I an Englishman, I should be terribly uneasy at this dilemma, and wish extremely that some expedient cou'd be found to lessen the danger on one side, without encreasing it on the other. I have been told, that in a neighbouring republick, numerous forces are constantly kept up, without any danger at all to the constitution; the single reason of which, I take to be, that the republick itself is at the head of them, and can't be suppos'd to employ them against itself: But were another power to model and command them, it is manifest, that a danger might arise. In such a case therefore, it shou'd seem prudent to lay that power under proper limitations; and methinks, wheresoever it was lodg'd, there wou'd be no cause to oppose those limitations; because the more safe it can be made, the more durable and easy it will be.

Why have former Kings of England been oblig'd to part with rights that undeniably belonged to them, as the ancient prerogatives of their crown? Because the use of them was dangerous to their people.—Had the dangerous part of them

them been remov'd, the beneficial might still have been retain'd; but by resolving to give up neither, they lost both. The argument is yet stronger, in a point where prerogative cannot be pretended.

It is therefore the interest of the governor, as well as of the governed, to make whatever is necessary agreeable; and of all mistakes in policy, the greatest is, to confound what is hurtful, with what is necessary.

Far be it from me, replied my friend, to desire to see a standing army made agreeable.

I understand you, said I, you are afraid of the unpopularity of the sound: But when for want of that army your tenants houses are burn'd about their ears, and the whole country ravag'd and laid waste, you may chance to grow unpopular the other way; and to find that a well regulated provision for your safety and defence, is more agreeable than weakness and desolation.

What wou'd you have us do? replied he warmly. We are liable to be hurt so many ways, that we don't know what to avoid, or what to chuse. The best provision we can make for our security, may be perverted and applied to our undoing. The truth is, that no single thing is perfect, and government less perfect than any other, because compos'd of so many various parts, and dependant on so many different springs. The love of liberty is attended with anxieties, which servitude is a stranger to; but servitude is attended with a baseness

ness which our nature makes us loath: It may be easier to sit quietly in prison, and solicit the good graces of the jailor; but a generous mind will rather struggle through the bars, let the pain be what it will, as long as there is any opening left to encourage the attempt. And if those who defend their liberties are liable to errors and miscarriages, which give their enemies a great advantage over them, those enemies themselves are no less liable to weakness and mismanagement, which often render their most pernicious schemes abortive, and turn the mischief on the heads of the contrivers.

LETTER LXXI.

SELIM to MIRZA at Ispahan.

From London.

THE other morning, a friend of mine came to me, and told me, with the air of one who brings an agreeable piece of news, that there was a lady who most passionately desir'd the pleasure of my acquaintance, and had commission'd him to carry me to see her.—I will not deny to thee, that my vanity was a little flatter'd with this message: I fancy'd she had seen me in some publick place, and taken a liking to my person; not being able to comprehend what other motive cou'd make her send for a man she was a stranger to in so free and extraordinary a manner. I painted

ted her in my own imagination very young, and very handsome, and set out with the most pleasing expectations, to see the conquest I had made. But when I arriv'd at the place of assignation, I found a little old woman very dirty, encircled by four or five strange fellows, one of whom had a paper in his hand, which he was reading to her with all the emphasis of an author.

My coming in oblig'd him to break off, which put him a good deal out of humour; but the lady understanding who I was, receiv'd me with a great deal of satisfaction, and told me, she had long had a curiosity to be acquainted with a Mahometan: For you must know (said she) that I have applied myself particularly to the study of theology, and by profound meditation and enquiry have formed a religion of my own, much better than the vulgar one in all respects. I never admit any body to my house, who is not distinguish'd from the common herd of Christians by some extraordinary notion in divinity: All these gentlemen are eminently heretical, each in a way peculiar to himself: They are so good to do me the honour of instructing me in their several points of faith, and submit their opinions to my judgment. Thus, sir, I have compos'd a private system, which must necessarily be perfecter than any, because it is collected out of all; but to compleat it, I want a little of the koran, a book which I have heard spoken of mighty handsomely, by many learned men of my acquaintance:

And I assure you, sir, I shou'd have a very good opinion of Mahomet himself, if he was not a little too hard upon the ladies. Be so kind therefore to initiate me in your mysteries, and you shall find me very docile and very grateful.

Madam, replied I in great confusion, I did not come to England as a missionary, and was never vers'd in religious disputation. But if a Persian tale wou'd entertain you, I cou'd tell you one, that the Eastern ladies are mighty fond of.

A Persian tale! cry'd she; have you the influence to offer me a Persian tale! really, sir, I am not us'd to be so affronted; and must desire you to come no more within these doors, for I have no leisure to throw away upon a tale-teller.

At these words, she retir'd into her closet, with her whole train of metaphysicians, and left my friend and me to go away, as unworthy any further communion with her.

LETTER LXXII.

SELIM to MIRZA at Ispahan.

From London.

WOULDST thou know, Mirza, the present state of Europe? I will give it thee in very few words.—There is one nation in it, which thinks of nothing but how to prey upon the others; while the others are entirely taken up with preying upon themselves. There is one
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nation where particulars take a pride in the glory of their country: While in the others no glory is consider'd, but that of raising or improving a vast estate. There is one nation which, though able in negotiation, puts its principal confidence in the sword; while the others trust wholly to the pen, though incapable of using it with advantage. There is one nation which invariably pursues a great plan of general dominion; while the others are pursuing little interests, through a labyrinth of changes and contradictions. What, Mirza, dost thou think will be the consequence? Is it not probable that this nation will in the end be lord of all the rest, even as all the religions of the earth must at last be overpower'd * by that of Mahomet, which is simple, uniform, and founded upon force; whereas the rest are rent in pieces by their divisions, and weak by the very frame of their institutions.

L E T T E R LXXIII.

SELIM to MIRZA at Ispahan.

From London.

I WAS the other day in a coffee-house, where I found a man declaiming upon the present state of Persia, and so warm for the interests of

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* The Mahometans are taught by the Alcoran, that sooner or later all the world will be submitted to their law.

Kouli Can, that if it had not been for his language and his dress, I shou'd have taken him for a Persian.

Sir, said I, are you acquainted with Kouli Can, that you concern yourself thus about him? No, said he, I was never out of England; but I love the Persians for being enemies to the Turks.

What hurt have the Turks done you, answer'd I, that you bear such enmity against them?

Sir, replied he, I am afraid they shou'd hurt the emperor, whose friend I have always declar'd myself.

I enquir'd of a gentleman that sat by me, who this friend of the emperor's might be, and was told that he was a dancing master in St. James's-street.

For my part (said a young gentleman finely dress'd, that stood sipping a dish of tea by the fire side) I don't care if Kouli Can, and the great Turk, and all the Persians and Emperors in Europe were at the bottom of the sea, provided Farinelli be but safe.

The indifference of this gentleman surpriz'd me more than the importance of the other.

If you are concern'd for Farinelli, said a third (who they told me was a chymist) persuade him to take my drop, and that will secure him from the humidity of the English air, which may very much prejudice his voice.

Will it not also make a man of him again, said a gentleman to the doctor? After the miracles
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we have been told it has perform'd, there is nothing more wanting but such a cure to compleat its reputation.

L E T T E R LXXIV.

SELIM to MIRZA at Ispahan.

From London.

A FRIEND of mine was talking to me some days ago, of the spirit of enthusiasm, which appear'd so strongly in the first professors of our religion; and, as he pretended, in the prophet himself: To that chiefly he ascrib'd their mighty conquests, and observ'd, that there needed nothing more to render them invincible, such a spirit being constantly attended with a contempt of pleasure and of ease, of danger and of pain. — If, said he, the enthusiasts of this country in the reign of Charles the first, had been united among themselves, like the Arabians under Mahomet and his successors, I make no doubt, but they might have conquer'd all Europe: But unhappily their enthusiasm was directed to different points; some were bigots to the church of England, some to Calvin, some to particular whimsies of their own; one set of them run mad for a republick, others were no less out of their wits in the love of monarchy; so that instead of making themselves formidable to their neighbours, they turn'd the edge of their fury against each other, and de-

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stroy'd all peace and order here at home. Yet as much as our ancestors suffer'd then by the wrong direction of their zeal, I wish the present age may not suffer more by the total want of it among us. There is so cold and lifeless an unconcern to every thing but a narrow private interest; we are so little in earnest about religion, virtue, honour, or the good of our country; that unless some spark of the antient fire shou'd revive, I am afraid we shall jest away our liberties, and all that is serious to our happiness. If the great Mr. Hampden had convers'd with our modern race of wits, he wou'd have been told, that it was a ridiculous enthusiasm, to trouble himself about a trifling sum of money, because it was rais'd against the privileges of the people, and that he might thrive better by patience and submission.

LETTER LXXV.

SELIM to MIRZA at Isfahan.

From London.

THERE is a new science produc'd in Europe of late years, entirely unknown to any former age, or to any other part of the world, which is call'd treaty learning. I have been let into a general idea of it, by a very ingenious friend of mine, who has acquir'd a considerable talent in it, having serv'd an apprenticeship of twenty years under

under different masters in foreign courts, and made, in a political sense, the tour of Europe. He tells me, it is a very extensive study; for not only the rights of every prince, but their inclinations to the rights of any other are therein set forth and comprehended. This has branch'd it self out into an infinity of separate and secret articles, engagements, counter-engagements, memorials, remonstrances, declarations; all which the learned in this science are requir'd to know perfectly by heart, that they may be ready upon occasion to apply them, or elude their application, as the interest of their masters shall demand.

He shew'd me ten or twelve volumes lately publish'd, consisting only of the treaties which have been made since the beginning of this century, four or five of which were quite fill'd with those of England.

Sure, said I, this huge heap of negotiations cou'd never have been employ'd about the business of this little spot of earth for so small a space of time as thirty years! No,——The affairs of all Europe must be settled in them, for the next century at least.——For the next session of parliament, answer'd he; these political machines are seldom mounted to go longer than that period, without being taken to pieces, or new-wound up.

But how, said I, cou'd England, which is an island, be enough concern'd in what passes on the continent, to undergo all this labour in adjusting it?

O, replied he, we grew weary of being confin'd within the narrow verge of our own interests; we thought it look'd more considerable to expatiate, and give our talents room to play. But this was not the only end of our continual and restless agitation: It may frequently be the interest of a minister, if he find things in a calm, to trouble the waters, and work up a storm about him; if not to perplex and confound those above him, yet to embarrass and intimidate the competitors or rivals of his power.

Perhaps too, there might be still a deeper motive: These engagements are for the most part pretty chargeable; and those who are oblig'd to make them good; complain that they are much the poorer for them; but it is not sure, that those who form them are so too.—

As far, said I, as my little observation can enable me to judge of these affairs, the multiplicity of your treaties is as hurtful as the multiplicity of your laws. In Asia, a few plain words are found sufficient to settle the differences of particulars in a state, or of one state with another; but here you run into volumes upon both; and what is the effect of it? Why after great trouble and great expence, you are as far from a decision as before; nay, often more puzzled and confounded. The only distinction seems to be, that in your law suits, perplexing as they are, there is at last, a rule of equity to resort to; but in the other disputes, the last appeal is to the iniquitous rule of force,
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and princes treat by the mouths of their great guns, which soon demolish all the paper on both sides, and tear to pieces every cobweb of negociation.

L E T T E R LXXVI.

SELIM to MIRZA at Ispahan.

From London.

I WAS lately at a tavern with a set of company very oddly put together: There was a country gentleman, a man of honest principles, but extremely a bigot to his religion, which was that of the church of Rome; there was a lawyer, who was moderate enough in matters of belief, but zealous in the cause of civil liberty; there was a courtier who seem'd not to believe any thing, and to be angry with every body that did.

This last, very rudely attack'd the faith of the poor country gentleman, and laid open to him the frauds of the Roman priesthood, who by slow, but regular degrees, had erected such a tyranny over the minds and spirits of the people, that nothing was too gross for them to impose, or too arrogant to assume. He set forth the vast difference between a bishop in the primitive ages of christianity, who was a receiver of charities for the poor, and a pope, with a triple crown upon his head, and half the wealth of christendom in his treasury. He lamented the simplicity of those, who without looking back to the original of things, imagine that all is right which they find

find establish'd; and mistake the corruptions of a system for the system itself; he inveigh'd against the pusillanimity of others, who though they see the corruptions, and detest them, yet suffer them to continue un-reform'd, only because they have been tolerated so long; as if any evil was less dangerous, by being grown habitual.

He concluded, by declaiming very eloquently on the use and advantage of free thinking, that is, of doubting and examining every article propos'd to our belief, which alone cou'd detect these impositions, and confound the ill purposes of their authors.

His antagonist had little to reply; but intrench'd himself in the necessity of submitting to the authority of the church, and the danger of allowing private judgment, to call in question her decisions.

The dispute wou'd have been turn'd into a quarrel by the zeal of one, and the asperity of the other; had not the lawyer very seasonably interpos'd, who, addressing himself to the advocate for freedom, desir'd to know, whether liberty in temporals was not at least as important to mankind, as liberty in spirituals? How then comes it, that you who are so warm for the maintenance of the last, are so notoriously indifferent to first? To what shall we ascribe the mighty difference between your political and religious faith? and whence is it that the former is so easy, and the latter so intractable? Can those who are thus
quick-

quicksighted in the frauds of ecclesiastical dominion, see no juggling at all in their civil rulers? Are the impositions less glaring or more tolerable, which they both acquiesce in and support, than those which they so violently oppose? Let us take the very instance you have given.—Is a pope more unlike to a christian bishop, than a sole minister to an officer of a free state? If you look back to the original of things, what traces will you find of such an office? In what antient constitution can you discover the foundations of such a power? Is not this a most manifest corruption, growing out of ten thousand corruptions, and naturally productive of ten thousand more? If you say these are mysteries of state, and therefore not to be examin'd; I am sure the mysteries you attack, have at least as good a title to your respect; and less mischief will attend on their remaining not subject to enquiry.

Or will you borrow the arguments of your adversary, and plead the necessity of submission, and the danger of setting up reason against authority? If so, I wou'd only put you in mind, that all authority flows from reason, and ought to lose its force in proportion as it deviates from its source.

It is a jest to say, that mankind cannot be govern'd without these impositions; they were govern'd happily before these were invented, much more happily than they have been ever since: As well may it be said, that christian piety, which was establish'd in plain-dealing and simplicity, must
be

be supported by the knavery and pageantry introduced of late ages by the church of Rome. But the truth is, that most men do in the state, just what you complain of in religion; they maintain abuses by prescription, and make the bad condition things are in, an argument for letting them grow worse.

I don't know, said I, interrupting him, whether the gentleman is not rather too bold in carrying his doubts so far into religion; perhaps he would do better to submit; at least we mahometans are so taught. But this I am sure of, that a blind confidence in temporal affairs, agrees very ill with doubt in spirituals. A free enquirer into points of speculation, should beyond all others be ashamed of a tame compliance in points of action;

The unthinking may be passive from delusion, or at least from inadvertency; but the greatest monster and worst criminal in society, is a Free-thinking-slave.

LETTER LXXVII.

SELIM to MIRZA at Isfahan.

From London.

EVERY nation has some peculiar excellence, by which it is distinguish'd from its neighbours, and of which without vanity it may boast: Thus Italy produces the finest fingers; England the

the stoutest boxers; Germany the profoundest theologians; and France is incomparable for its cooks. This last advantage carries the palm from all the rest, and that nation has great reason to be proud of it, as a talent of universal currency; and for which all other countries do them homage: On this single perfection depends the pleasure, the magnificence, the pride, nay the reputation of every court in Europe: Without a good French cook there is no ambassador can possibly do his master's business: no secretary of state can hold his office, no man of quality can support his rank and dignity. A friend of mine who frequently has the honour to dine at the tables of the great, for which he pays no higher price than his vote in parliament, has sometimes obliged me with the bill of fare, and (as near as he cou'd) an estimate of the charge which these genteel entertainments are attended with. I told him, that their dinners put me in mind of what I had heard about their politicks: They are artificial, unsubstantial, and unwholsome, but at the same time most ruinously expensive. Sure, said I, your great men must have digestions prodigiously sharp and strong, to carry off such a load of various meats as are serv'd up to them every day! They must not only be made with heads and hearts, but with stomachs very different from other people!

Not in the least, answer'd he——They seldom touch any of the dainties that are before them: Those dainties, like the women in your seraglio's,
are

are more intended for ornament than use. There is always a plain dish set in a corner, a homely joint of English beef or mutton, on which the master of the feast makes his dinner, and two or three choice friends, who are allow'd to have a cut with him, out of special grace and favour, while the rest are languishing in vain for such a happiness, and piddling upon ortolans and truffles.

I have seen a poor country gentleman sit down to one of these fine dinners, with an extream dislike to the French cookery; yet, for fear of being counted unpolite, not daring to refuse any thing that was offer'd him; but cramming and sweating with the struggle between his aversion and civility.

Why then, said I, this continual extravagance? Why this number of victims daily sacrificed to the dæmon of luxury? How is it worth a man's while to undo himself, perhaps to undo his country, that his board may be grac'd with patties of perigord, when his guests had rather have the fowl from his barn-door? Your comparison of the seraglio will not hold; for tho' indeed there is an unnecessary variety, yet they are not all serv'd up to us together; we content ourselves with one or two of 'em at a meal, and reserve the rest for future entertainments. I concluded, with repeating to him a story, which is taken out of the annals of our kings.

Schah Abbas, at the beginning of his reign, was more luxurious than became so great a prince.

One

One might have judg'd of the vastness of his empire, by the variety of dishes at his table: Some were sent him from the Tigris and Euphrates, others from the Oxus and Caspian sea. One day, when he gave a dinner to his nobles, Mahomet Ali, keeper of the three tombs, was placed next to the best dish of all the feast, out of respect to the sanctity of his office: But instead of falling to and eating heartily, as holy men are wont to do, he fetch'd a dismal groan, and fell a weeping. Shah Abbas, surpriz'd at his behaviour, desir'd him to explain it to the company: He wou'd fain have been excus'd; but the sophi order'd him on pain of his displeasure, to acquaint them with the cause of his disorder.

Know then, said he, O monarch of the earth, that when I saw thy table cover'd in this manner, it brought to my mind a dream, or rather vision, which was sent me from the prophets whom I serve: On the seventh night of the moon Rhamazan, I was sleeping under the shade of the sacred tombs, when, methought, the holy Ravens of the sanctuary bore me up on their wings into the air, and in a few moments conveyed me to the lowest heaven, where the messenger of God, on whom be peace, was sitting in his luminous tribunal, to receive petitions from the earth. Around him stood an infinite throng of animals, of every species and quality, which all joined in preferring a complaint against thee, Schah Abbas, for destroying them wantonly and tyrannically,
beyond

beyond what any necessity cou'd justify, or any natural appetite demand.

It was alledged by them, that ten or twelve of them were often murder'd, to compose one dish for the niceness of thy palate; some gave their tongues only, some their bowels, some their fat, and others their brains, or blood. In short, they declared, such constant waste was made of them, that unless a stop was put to it in time, they should perish entirely by thy gluttony. The prophet hearing this, bent his brows, and order'd six Vultures to fetch thee alive before him: They instantly brought thee to his tribunal, where he commanded thy stomach to be open'd, and examined whether it was bigger or more capacious, than those of other men: When it was found to be just of the common size, he permitted all the animals to make reprisals on the body of their destroyer; but before one in ten thousand cou'd get at thee, every particle of it was devoured; so ill-proportion'd was the offender to the offence. —

This story made such an impression on the sopher, that he would not suffer above one dish of meat to be brought to his table ever after.

L E T T E R LXXVIII.

TO IBRAHIM MOLLACH at Ispahan.

From London.

YES, holy Mollac; I am more and more convinc'd of it; infidelity is certainly attended with a spirit of infatuation. The prophet hurts the understandings of all those who refuse to receive his holy law; he punishes the hardness of their hearts, by the depravation of their judgments. How can we otherwise account for what I have seen since my arrival among christians?

I have seen a people whose very being depends on commerce, suffer luxury and the heavy load of taxes to ruin their manufacturers at home, and turn the balance against them in foreign trade!—

I have seen them glory in the greatness of their wealth, when they are reduc'd every year to carry on the expences of the government, by robbing the very fund which is to ease them of a debt of fifty millions!

I have seen them fit out fleets, augment their forces, express continual fears of an invasion; and all the while hug themselves in the notion of being blest with a profound and lasting peace!

I have seen them wrapt up in full security, upon the flourishing state of publick credit, only because they had a prodigious stock of paper,
which

which now indeed, they circulate as money ; but which the first alarm of a calamity, may in an instant make meer paper of again !

I have seen them constantly busied in, passing laws for the better regulation of their police, and never taking any care of their execution: loudly declaring the abuses of their government, and quietly allowing them to encrease !

I have seen them distressed for want of hands to carry on their husbandry and manufactures, yet permitting some thousands of able men to beg about their streets, or breeding up ten times that number to be lazy, under a notion of being learned !

I have seen them make such a provision for their poor, as wou'd relieve all their wants, if well applied ; and suffer a third part of them to starve, from the roguery and riot of those entrusted with the care of them !

But the greatest of all the Wonders I have seen, and which most of all proves their Infatuation, is, that they profess to maintain liberty by corruption !

L E T-

LETTER LXXIX.

SELIM to MIRZA at Ispahan.

From London.

I FELICITATE thee, Mirza, on thy new dignity; I bow myself reverently before thee, not with the heart of a flatterer, but a friend: The favour of thy master shines upon thee; he has rais'd thee to the right hand of his throne; the treasures of Persia are committed to thy custody: If thou behavest thyself honestly and wisely, I shall think thee much greater from thy advancement; if otherwise, much lower than before. Thou hast undertaken a charge very important to thy prince, and to his people; both are equally concern'd in thy administration, both have equally a right to thy fidelity. If ever thou shalt separate their interests, if thou shalt set up the one against the other, know, it will end in the ruin of both. Do not imagine, that thy master will be richer by draining his subjects of their wealth: Such gains are irreparable losses; they may serve a present sordid purpose; but dry up the sources of opulence for futurity. I wou'd recommend to thy attention and remembrance, the saying of a famous English treasurer in the happy reign of queen Elizabeth. I don't love, said that truly able minister, to see the treasury swell like a distemper'd

temper'd spleen, when the other parts of the state are in a consumption.——Be it thy care to prevent such a decay; and, to that end, not only save the publick all unnecessary expence, but so digest and order what is needful, that perplexity may not serve to cover fraud, nor incapacity lurk behind confusion. Rather submit to any difficulty and distress in the conduct of thy ministry, than anticipate the revenues of the government without an absolute necessity; for such expedients are a temporary ease, but a permanent destruction.

In relieving the people from their taxes, let it also be thy glory to relieve them from the infinite number of tax gatherers, which, far worse than the Turkish or Russian armies, have harrafs'd and plunder'd our poor country.

As thou art the distributer of the bounties of the crown, make them the reward of service and of merit; not the hire of parasites and flatterers to thy master, or thyself. But above all, as thou art now a publick person, elevate thy mind beyond any private view; try to enrich the publick before thyself; and think less of establishing thy family at the head of thy country, than of setting thy country at the head of Asia.

If thou can'st steadily persevere in such a conduct, thy prince will want thee more than thou dost him: If thou buildest thy fortune on any other basis, how high soever it may rise, it will be tottering from the weakness of its foundation.

He

PERSIAN in ENGLAND. 215

He alone is a minister of state, whose services are necessary to the publick; the rest are the creatures of caprice, and feel their slavery even in their power.

LETTER LXXX.

SELIM to MIRZA at Isphahan.

From London.

THE virtuous Abdallah is return'd to England, after having been absent fourteen moons. I yesterday restor'd to him his lovely Zelis, the wife whom he had given me at his departure, and whom I had treated like a sister. Nothing ever was so moving as the scene, when I join'd their hands again, after a separation which they had fear'd won'd prove eternal. The possession of the finest woman in the world, could not give me so much pleasure as this act of humanity and justice: I made two people happy who deserv'd it; and am secure of the affections of them both to the last moment of their lives. When the transports of their joy were a little over, Abdallah gave me the following relation of all that had happen'd to him since he left us.—

The

The HISTORY of ABDALLAH.

YOU know that I sail'd from England with an intent to redeem my father from captivity: As soon as I came to Malta, I went and threw myself at the feet of the Grand Master, beseeching him to take the ransom I had brought, and set my father free.

He answer'd me, that the person for whom I sued, was no longer in a condition to be ransom'd, being condemn'd to die for treason the next day. I was ready to die myself at this account; and desiring to know the particulars of his offence, was inform'd, that being unable to redeem himself, he was put to the oar like a common slave, without any regard to his innocence or age: That during an engagement with a Turkish ship, he had persuaded the other slaves to quit their oars, and fight against the Christians; but, that being overpower'd, he was brought to Malta, and condemn'd to be broke upon the wheel, as an example to the other captives in the gallies: That this dreadful sentence was to be executed upon him the morning after my arrival, and no ransom cou'd be accepted for his life.

O Heaven! said I, did I come so far to no other purpose, but to be witness of the death of my wretched father, and a death so full of horror? Wou'd the waves of the sea had swallow'd me up, before I reach'd this fatal and accursed shore!

O Ab-

O Abderamen! O my father! what avails to thee the piety of thy son? How shall I bear to take my leave of thee for ever, at our first meeting, after an absence which seem'd so long? Can I stand by, and give thee up to torments, when I flatter'd myself that I arriv'd to bring thee liberty? Alas! my presence will only aggravate thy sufferings, and make the bitterness of death more insupportable.

In this extremity, I offer'd the Grand Master, not only to pay down all the ransom I promis'd him before, but to yield myself a voluntary slave, and serve in the gallies all my life, if Abderamen's might be spared.

He seem'd touch'd with my proposal, and inclin'd to pity me; but was told by a jesuit, who was his confessor, that an example of severity was necessary; and that he ought to pardon my father on no terms but renouncing Mahometism, and turning Christian.

No, cry'd I, if that is to be the price of a few unhappy years, better both of us shou'd perish than accept them.—But can you, said I to the priest, who profess an holiness superior to other men, can you obstruct the mercy of your Prince, and compel him to destroy a wretched man, whose only crime was the natural love of liberty? Is this your way of making converts to your faith, by the terror of racks and wheels, instead of reason?—

K

My

My reproaches signify'd nothing but to incense him, and I quitted the palace in despair. I was going to the prison to see my father, for the first and last time, when a Turkish slave accosted me, and bade me follow him.—I refused to do it, but he assured me it was of moment to the life of Abderamen. I follow'd him, and he led me by a back way to a woman's apartment in the palace.—I continu'd there till past midnight without seeing any body, in agitations not to be conceiv'd: At last there came to me a lady richly dress'd in the habit of my own country. After looking at me attentively some time, O Abdallah, said she, have you forgot Zoraide, the sister of Zelis?

These words soon brought her to my remembrance, tho' I had not seen her for many years: I embraced her tenderly, and desired to know what fortune had carry'd her to *Malta*?

I need not acquaint you, answer'd she, that I am of one of the best families in Cyprus, and that I was married young to a rich merchant of Aleppo. I had by him two children, a son and daughter; and liv'd very happily some years, till my husband's business carrying him to Cyprus, I persuaded him to let me go, and make a visit to my relations in that island. In our passage a violent storm arose, which drove us westward beyond the isle of Candia; and before we cou'd put into any harbour, a Maltese pyrate attack'd us, kill'd my husband, and carried me to Malta.

My

My beauty touch'd the heart of the Grand Master, which is the more surprizing, as I took no pains to set it off; thinking of nothing but the loss I had sustain'd: He bought me of the Knight, whose prize I was; and I thought it some comfort in my captivity, that I was deliver'd from the hands that had been stain'd in my husband's blood. The passion of my new lord was so excessive, that he us'd me more like a princess than a slave. He cou'd deny me nothing that I ask'd him, and was so liberal, that he never approach'd me without a present. You see the pomp and magnificence in which I live: My wealth is great, and my power in this place superior to any body's. Hear then, Abdallah, what my friendship has done for you, and remember the obligation you have to me. I have employ'd all my interest with my lover to save the life of Abderamen: He has consented to it, and moreover to set him free upon the payment of the ransom you propos'd. But, in recompence for the aid which I have given you, you must promise to assist me in an affair that will, probably, be attended with some danger. I assured her, there was nothing I wou'd not risque to do the sister of Zelis any service.

You shall know, said she, what it is I require of you, when the time comes to put it in execution; till then remain at Malta, and wait my orders.

At these words she deliver'd to me a pardon under the seal of the Grand Master, and bid me

carry it instantly to my father; I was so transported that I cou'd not stay to thank her; I ran, I flew to the prison of Abderamen, and shewing the order I brought with me to his guards, was admitted to the dungeon where he lay.

The poor old man expecting nothing but his death, and believing I was the officer that came to carry him to the place of execution, fainted away before I had time to discover to him either my person or my errand. While he lay in that state of insensibility, I unbound his chains, and bore him into the open air, where, with a good deal of difficulty he recover'd. O my father! said I to him (when I perceived that his senses were return'd) do you not know your son Abdallah, who is come hither to save your life, who has obtain'd your pardon, and redeem'd you from captivity?—The surprize of joy that seiz'd him in that instant at my sight and words, was too sudden and violent for his age and weakness to support. He struggled some time to make an answer; but at last, straining me in his arms and muttering some half-form'd sounds, he sunk down, and expired on my bosom.—

When I saw that he was dead, I lost all patience, and covering myself with dust bewailed my folly, in not telling him my good tidings by degrees.

By this time it was broad day, and the whole town being inform'd of my affliction, was gathered about me in great crowds. The Grand Master

ter himself taking pity of me, sent to tell me, that he wou'd permit me to bear away my father's body to Aleppo, and excuse me the ransom I had offer'd, since death had deliver'd him without it. This indulgence comforted me a little, and I wou'd have embark'd immediately for the Levant, if I had not been stopp'd by my promise to Zoraide. Several days pass'd without my hearing any news of her. I had already hired a small vessel, and put on board the remains of Abderamen, when late one night I was wak'd out of my sleep by Zoraide in the habit of a man, who told me, that she came to claim my promise. I ask'd what she requir'd me to do? To carry me to Aleppo, answer'd she, that I may see my dear children once again, and enrich them with the treasures which I have gain'd from the bounty of my lover. Those treasures are useless to me without them; in the midst of all my pomp and outward pleasure I am perpetually pining for their loss; the mother's heart is unsatisfied within, nor will it let me enjoy a moment's peace, till I am restored to them in my happy native land. As she said this, she shew'd me some bags of gold, and a casket fill'd with jewels of great value. I must insist, Abdallah, continued she, that you set sail this very night, and take me along with you. The weather is tempestuous, but that circumstance will favour my escape; and I had rather venture to perish in the sea, than live any longer from my family.

The sense of the obligation I had to her made me consent to do what she desired, how perilous soever it appear'd to me. As I had a permission from the Grand Master to go away as soon as I thought fit, I put to sea that night without any hindrance, and the wind blowing heard off the shore, in a little while we were out of sight of Malta. The water was so rough for two or three days, that we thought it impossible our barque could weather it out; but at length the storm abating, we pursued our voyage with a very fair wind, and arriv'd safe in the port of Scanderoon. Zoraide was transported with the thought of being so near Aleppo, and her children; she embraced me in the most affectionate manner, and express'd a gratitude for the service I had done her far beyond what it deserv'd. But how great was her disappointment, and affliction, when we were told by the people of Scanderoon, that the plague was at Aleppo, and had destroy'd a third part of the inhabitants!

Ah! wretched Zoraide, cry'd she weeping, where are now all thy hopes of being blest in the sight of thy two children? Perhaps, those two children are no more; or, if they still live, it is in hourly expectation of dying with the rest of their fellow citizens. Perhaps, at this moment they begin to sicken, and want the care of their mother to tend upon them, when they are abandon'd by every other friend.

Thus

Thus did she torture herself with dreadful apprehensions, and often turning her eyes towards Aleppo, gave herself up to all the agonies of grief.

I said every thing I cou'd think of to relieve her, but she wou'd not be comforted.

The next morning the servants I had put about her, came, and told me, that she was not to be found: They also brought me a letter which inform'd me, that not being able to endure the uncertainty she was in about her children, she had stolen away by night, and gone to Aleppo, to share their danger with them. That if she and her family escap'd the sickness, I shou'd hear from her again; but if they died, she was resolv'd not to survive them. She added, that she had left me a box of diamonds worth two thousand pistoles, being a fourth part of the jewels which she had brought from Malta by my assistance.

You may imagine how deeply I was affected at reading this letter. I resolv'd to stay at Scanderoon till I had some news of her; notwithstanding my passionate desire to return to Zelis. I had waited five weeks with great impatience, when we receiv'd accounts that the infection was quite ceas'd, and the commerce with Aleppo restor'd again. I immediately went to visit my native town, but alas! I had little pleasure in the sight of it, after so dismal a calamity. My first enquiry was about Zoraide and her children. They carried me to her house, where I found her son,
a youth

a youth of sixteen. When I made myself known to him he fell a weeping, and told me his mother and sister were both dead. I very sincerely join'd with him in his grief, and offer'd to restore to him the jewels she had given me. No, Abdallah, said he, I am rich enough in what I inherit from my father and Zoraide. But these riches cannot comfort me for her death, nor any time wear out of my remembrance the uncommon affection which occasion'd it. O Abdallah! what a mother have I lost, and what a friend are you depriv'd of? When she came hither, continued he, from Scanderoon, my sister and I believ'd we had seen a spirit: But when we found it was really Zoraide, our hearts melted with tenderness and joy. That joy was soon over; for, the third day after her arrival at Aleppo, I found myself seiz'd with the distemper. She never quitted my bed-side during my illness, and to the care she took of me I owed my life: But it proved fatal to her and my poor sister, who both caught the infection by nursing me; and having weaker constitutions were not able to struggle with it so well. My sister died first, and Zoraide quickly follow'd: When she perceiv'd herself just expiring, she call'd me to her, and bid me endeavour to find you out at Scanderoon, and let you know, that she bequeathed to you the portion she had intended for my sister, amounting to five thousand pieces of gold, as to the man in the world she most esteem'd: She added, that to you she recommended me with
her

her latest breath, imploring you to take care of me for her sake, and the sake of her sister Zelis.—

The poor boy was not able to go on with his story any further. I accepted the legacy, and did my utmost to discharge worthily the trust conferred upon me: But my first care was to bury Abderamen with all the pomp that our customs will admit. After some time spent in settling the affairs of my pupil, and my own, I took a passage on board an English ship, and arrived happily in London.

I am now possess'd of a fortune that is sufficient to maintain Zelis in the manner I desire, and have nothing more to ask of Heaven but an opportunity of repaying you, O Selim, the friendship and goodness you have shewn me.

L E T T E R LXXXI.

SELIM to MIRZA at Ispahan.

From London.

I AM going, in the confidence of friendship, to give thee a proof of the weakness of human nature, and the unaccountable capriciousness of our passions. Since I deliver'd up Zelis to her husband, I have not enjoy'd a moment's peace. Her beauty, which I saw without emotion while she continued in my power, now she is out of it, has fired me to that degree that I have almost lost my

my-reason. I cannot bear to see her in the possession of the man to whom I gave her : If shame, if despair did not hinder it, I should ask him for her again.—In this uneasiness and disorder of my mind, there remains but one part for me to take : I must fly from her charms and my own weaknets ; I must retire to my seraglio in Persia, and endeavour, by the attractions of variety, to efface the impression she has made. I have more than compleated the four years I proposed to stay in England ; and am now determin'd to embarque for the Levant the beginning of next month. It is my fix'd resolution to go away, without giving Zelis the least intimation of the cause of my departure : Abdallah shall never know that I am his rival ; it would take too much from the character of a friend. Thou art the only one to whom I dare confide my folly ; and since it has hurt nobody but myself, I hope thou wilt rather pity than blame me for it.

L E T T E R LXXXII.

SELIM to MIRZA at Isphahan.

From London.

MY ship waits for me in the mouth of the river Thames, and thou may'st expect e're long to see thy friend, with a mind a good deal alter'd by his travels, but a heart which to thee is still the same.

It

It wou'd be unjust and ungrateful in me to quit this island, without expressing a very high esteem of the good sense, sincerity, and good nature I have found among the English: To these qualities I might also add politeness; which certainly they have as good a title to as any of their neighbours; but I am afraid that this accomplishment has been acquir'd too much at the expence of other virtues more solid and essential. Of their industry, their commerce is a proof; and for their valour, let their enemies declare it. Of their faults I will at present say no more, but that many of them are newly introduced, and so contrary to the genius of the people, that one wou'd hope they might be easily rooted out. They are undoubtedly, all circumstances consider'd, a very great, a very powerful, and happy nation: But how long they shall continue so, depends entirely on the preservation of their liberty. To the constitution of their government alone are attach'd all these blessings and advantages: Shou'd that ever be corrupted or depraved, they must expect to become the most contemptible, and most unhappy of mankind. For what can so much aggravate the wretchedness of an oppress'd and ruin'd people, as the remembrance of former freedom and prosperity? All the images and traces of their liberty, which, it is probable, no change will quite destroy, must be a perpetual reproach and torment to them, for having so degenerately parted with their birth-right. And
if

if slavery is to be endured, where is the man that wou'd not rather choose it, under the warm Sun of Agra or Ispahan, than in the northern climate and barren soil of England?

I therefore take my leave of my friends here, with this affectionate, and well-design'd advice, that they shou'd vigilantly watch over their constitution, and guard it by those bulwarks which alone are able to secure it, justice, vigour, perseverance, and frugality.

F I N I S.

